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Garegin Hambardzumyan

THE BOOK OF SIRACH IN THE ARMENIAN BIBLICAL TRADITION

YAKOB NALEAN AND HIS COMMENTARY ON SIRACH

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The Book of Sirach in the Armenian Biblical Tradition

Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies

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Friedrich V. Reiterer, Beate Ego and Tobias Nicklas

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Abbreviations

Arm.	Armenian
Bag.	Bagratowni Edition of the Armenian Bible (1860)
Eth.	Ethiopic Bible
Gr.	Greek
HB	Hebrew Bible
Heb.	Hebrew
Jer.	MS N. 2558 of Jerusalem, St. James' Monastery
Jer.SJ	St. James' Depository in Jerusalem
LXX	Septuagint
M	Masoretic texts
MM.	Mesrop Maštocʻ Matenadaran in Yerevan
MS	Manuscript
MS B	Cairo Genizah MS B
MSS	Manuscripts
NJ.	The Armenian MS Depository of New Julfa
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version of the English Bible
NT	New Testament
Os.	Oskan Erewancʻi's edition of the Armenian Bible (1666)
OT	Old Testament
Pl.	Plural
Sg.	Singular
Syr.	Syriac
VeM	Mechitarist Armenian Monastery in Venice
ViM	Mechitarist Armenian Monastery in Vienna
Vul.	Vulgate
Yer.	MS N. 5608 of Mesrop Maštocʻ Matenadaran
Zôh.	Zôhrapean Edtion of the Armenian Bible (1805)

1 Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

There has been growing interest in the Book of the Wisdom of Sirach over recent decades. Scholars have been particularly attracted to this book because of its almost encyclopedic coverage of a wide variety of topics, moral, theological and historical. Since the famous discovery of the Geniza MSS at the Qaraite Synagogue in Cairo, as well as the subsequent discoveries at Qumran and Masada, the book of Sirach has received significantly increased scholarly attention. Before these findings, the Hebrew text of Sirach had been considered extinct and only a few verses from the entire book were preserved in Hebrew Rabbinic literature. No serious textual analysis had been produced on any of the translations of Sirach prior to these new discoveries.

Straight after the new MSS were excavated, they were identified as copies of the original Hebrew text, that is, they were free from any direct dependence on Syriac or Greek texts.[1] Solomon Schecter was the first scholar to identify the Geniza MSS and to publish them in 1899.[2] Currently, about sixty-eight percent of the Hebrew text has been recovered and exposed to broader scholarship. The latest edition, comprising all of the extant Hebrew fragments, as well as a synopsis of all parallel Hebrew texts of Sirach, was published by Pancratius Beentjes in 2006.[3]

The role of Sirach as a part of the Writings (kətûvîm) of the OT has been a matter of dispute throughout the centuries and its use both in Rabbinic literature and in the Christian patristic tradition has given rise to a whole spectrum of arguments from later scholars.[4] A fair proportion of these disputes have been with respect to the place of Sirach in the OT.

This is also true in the case of the Armenian text of Sirach. The status of this book within the canon of the Armenian Bible has never been clearly defined ei-

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1 A. Di Lella, *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical And Historical Study* (London: Mountain & Co., 1966), pp. 15 – 9.

2 S. Schechter, C. Tylor, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book Ecclesiasticus, from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo, Genizah Collection Presented to the University of Cambridge by the Editors* (Cambridge: University Press, 1899).

3 P. C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). The book was reprinted in Atlanta in 2006.

4 G. Veltri, *Libraries, Translations, and 'Canonic' Texts: The Septuagint, Aquila and Ben Sira in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp, 190 – 4; 228 – 9.

ther by the ecclesiastical councils of the Armenian Church or by individual authors when referring to ancient canon lists. Furthermore, the Armenian translation of Sirach has not received sufficient attention from Armenian or Western scholars. Based on just a brief glace at the indexes of some major works in the field, it can be seen that the Armenian Sirach is yet to be thoroughly examined. Some Western scholars have even tended to dismiss the Armenian version of Sirach as a text of 'secondary' importance[5], and have thus neglected to carry out any further textual investigation – a decision doubtless influenced by their lack of familiarity with the Armenian language. This has not been the universal response, however. Some others have carried out research, perceiving the valuable role of the Armenian translation as a textual witness to both Greek and Syriac texts.[6]

As the first research to be undertaken in the field of Armenian translation of Sirach, this study sets out to achieve not one but several goals. Firstly, research has been carried out into the place of Sirach within the Armenian biblical tradition, assessing the textual value of the Armenian version. In this area, this thesis seeks to advance the state of knowledge by demonstrating that Sirach was translated not in the 13th or 17th centuries as proposed by several scholars[7] but not later than the first half of the 5th century. An exhaustive chart has been compiled to support this argument, containing a textual comparison of some key chapters of the Grabar text (Classical Armenian) with other translations, as well as references to Sirach which appear in medieval Armenian and translated literature.

The two sources of the Armenian text of Sirach, Syriac and Greek, have been studied far more than the Armenian itself. The Syriac Peshitta was used in the preparation of the first Armenian translation in around 406 C.E., which is known as the 'P'owt'anaki' (lit. hurried) version. Indeed, it was soon agreed by the Armenian translators of the 'Golden Age'[8] to produce a new recension in combination with Greek text.

> The first one, which was done partly from the Syriac and partly from the Greek texts, was produced in the period between 405–6 AD, when Armenians created the alphabet, and the Council of Ephesus (431 AD). The second translation was a revision of the previous one with

5 P. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (USA: Yale University 2010), p. 38.
6 H. Wace, *The Holy Bible with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary and A Revision of the Translation by Clergy of the Anglican Church: Apocrypha* (London: John Murray, 1888), p. 194.
7 Ծովական, Սիրաքայ հին թարգմանութիւնները, [Covakan, 'Sirak'ay hin hay t'argmanowt'iwnnerə' [The Old Armenian Translations of Sirach] in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 150–3.]
8 Because of the fruitful work carried out by Sts. Mesrop and Sahak together with their disciples the 5th century C.E. is reputed among Armenians as the 'Golden Age' of Armenian culture.

amendments from the new Greek text brought from Byzantium straight after the Council of Ephesus.[9]

It is known that the first Syriac translation was made from the Hebrew original. However, in the case of the translation of Sirach, it had additionally been influenced by Greek.[10] Thus, it is difficult to determine clearly which parts were transmitted directly from Syriac into Armenian with no allusions to Greek. However, it is evident from an examination of the chapters of the Zôhrapean edition of the Bible, published in 1805,[11] that on many occasions it follows the Syriac order of the chapters as well as the brevity of verses, which is characteristic of the Syriac text.[12] Also, in a few instances the Armenian text has a cross sign (+) which combines two or more bicola into one verse. This is not typical for the Greek text of Sirach but occurs frequently in Syriac.[13] Thus, this is another testimony that some of the Syriac influence is still preserved in the Armenian text. However, as stated above, the fusion of Syriac and Greek within the Armenian text is so strong that the surviving Syriac elements are almost unidentifiable.

The Greek version of Sirach has come down to us in two major recensions generally known as GI and GII. The latter is not preserved in a separate MS, however it can be reconstructed from Joseph Ziegler's groups of origenic and lucianic MSS.[14] Ziegler in his extremely valuable edition not only identifies the sources of extant Greek texts of Sirach but also indicates which textual witness belongs to which group.[15] According to him, the Armenian text, together with the Old Latin and Syro-Hexaplaric texts, belong to what he classifies the origenic group, though in some instances with influences from the lucianic recension.

Another contribution of this thesis is the creation of a list cataloguing all the extant Armenian biblical MSS in the world which contain either complete or fragmentary passages from Sirach. This list will be a valuable tool for future re-

9 Հ. Անասյան, Հայկական մատենագիտություն [H. Anasyan, *Haykakan Matenagitowłyown,* [Armenian Bibliography] *Vol. 2* (Yerevan, 1976), p. 308].

10 M. D. Nelson, *The Syriac Version of The Wisdom of Ben Sira Compared to the Greek and Hebrew Materials* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 19.

11 Աստուածաշնունչ մատեան Հին եւ Նոր կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownč' matean Hin ew Nor ktakaranac' Vol. 1* [Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments] (ed. Y. Zôhrapean, Venice, 1805). The edition is discussed in detail under the title 'Printed Editions of the Armenian Bible'].

12 A few examples of the Syriac influence are presented in the Comparative Chart of the extant Armenian texts of Sirach in the first section of this thesis.

13 J. Ziegler, *Sapientia Jesu Filii Sirach* (Göttingen, 1965), p. 36.

14 B. Wright, *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 4 – 5.

15 J. Ziegler, *'Sapientia'*, pp. 58 – 69. Cf. B. Wright, *'No Small Difference'*, pp. 4 – 5; 264.

searchers, and could be used for instance as a platform for making a much needed critical edition of the Armenian text of Sirach. It may also help to determine the setting in which this piece of wisdom literature was used in Armenia and its role within Armenian biblical literature.

In the second part of this thesis, the focus of research turns to the only Armenian commentary on Sirach, which was written by Yakob Nalean in the 18th century.[16] This commentary has suffered unjust neglect from scholars and has never been published. Although Gevorg Bambowkčʻean[17] and Tigran Sawalaneancʻ[18] have written on Nalean's commentary, both these scholars have treated it somewhat as an addition to the commentary on the Book of Lamentations by St. Grigor Narekacʻi. They present it as having a more empirical approach in contrast to the mystical and broadly allegorical commentary on the Book of Lamentations.[19]

Thus, this thesis seeks to uncover the unique contribution of Nalean's commentary to the Armenian scholarship of Sirach. The text of the Commentary is preserved only in twelve MSS scattered over the world and they are examined for the first time in this work.

The primary reason for including Nalean's work in this research is its importance as the only Armenian commentary on this biblical book and also the first Armenian *kerygmatic* (homiletic) commentary since medieval times.

Nalean's work is also valuable for its all-encompassing character in terms of the scope of the subjects commented on. In this regard, there are many similarities between Sirach itself and Nalean's commentary, in that they both set out to teach their readers how to conduct a righteous life which is shaped by wisdom and which has happiness as the final destination of one's life: 'Happy is the one who meditates on wisdom'.[20] Within his substantial work, Nalean not only gives profound explanations of all the verses of Sirach, but also responds to the polit-

16 There is a MS containing an Armenian translation of Cornelios A'Lapida's commentary on Sirach produced by Kapowtik Vardapet in the 18th century: cf. M. M. Matenadaran, N. 2055. This commentary has not been consulted in the current research as it does not represent the Armenian schools of interpretation.

17 Գ. Բամբուկճեան, Յակոբ Պատրիարք Նալեան. 1706–1764, Կեանքը, գործերը եւ աշխատանքները [G. Bambowkčʻean, *Yakob Patriarch Nalean: 1706–1764, Keanǩə, gorcerə ew ašxatanǩnerə* [Patriach Yakob Nalean: 1706–1764, His life works and deeds] (Istanbul, 1981), p. 43].

18 Թ. Սաւալանեանց, Պատմութիւն Երուսաղեմի [T. Sawalaneancʻ, *Patmowtʻiwn Erowsałemi,* [The History of Jerusalem] *Vol. 2* (Jerusalem, 1931), pp. 750–9].

19 Գ. Բամբուկճեան, Յակոբ Պատրիարք Նալեան [G. Bambowkčʻean, '*Yakob Patriarch Nalean*', 43.

20 Sir. 14:20].

ical and social situation of his time. He was influenced by Armenian national motives, and his commentary is conditioned by the context in 17th–18th century Armenia as well as in the Armenian communities abroad. An interesting example is the short poem called 'Աճացի՛ր' (Grow up!), which Nalean brings into his commentary when commenting on Sir. 10:15, 'The Lord plucks up the roots of the nations, and plants the humble in their place'.[21]

Nalean's use of Sirach attests, first, to his fascination with this great book of wisdom, and second, to the great importance given to the latter by Armenian teachers of the Church.

1.2 General Plan of the Research

The *first* part of the ***introduction*** is a summary of the issues and arguments addressed in the thesis. It clarifies the major objectives upon which the whole work is based. The literature survey included in this passage helps to grasp the current state of the scholarship of the Armenian Sirach both in Armenia and around the world. The chapter also contains an observation on Yakob Nalean's unique commentary presented in detail in the final chapter of this thesis. A treatment of some concerns regarding the date and authorship as well as major literary influences of Sirach can be found in the *second* part of the introduction.

In the ***second chapter*** of the research I present a background study of the Armenian text of Sirach which forms a basis for further discussions. This is followed by one of the two main sections of the thesis. After discussing the date of the original text of Sirach and its first Greek translation in the introduction I confine my study to the Armenian translation, its date and the sources of Armenian texts of Sirach. A large quantity of patristic references to Sirach in Classical Armenian, which supports an early date for the translation, has been engaged for the first time.

Within this chapter all sources of the Armenian text of Sirach are examined: Hebrew as a parent text of all translations and respectively Syriac and Greek as first and second sources.

The *second* part of this chapter is comprised of a list of all the extant Armenian MSS of Sirach. From research in the catalogues, as well as personal investigations in a number of major libraries and MS depositories which are known to contain Biblical texts in Armenian, I have been able to combine all the data into

21 The poem is discussed under the title 'Social Justice'.

one list which makes it possible to find any MS containing Sirach, either as part of an entire Bible MSS or copied separately.

In the same part of the chapter a thorough examination is undertaken of the major printed versions of the Armenian Sirach and the texts of the recently discovered Jerusalem and Yerevan MSS. This passage also introduces the four passages or verses which are found nowhere else but in the Armenian text of Sirach. The character and style of these verses have a lot to say about the role of Sirach in medieval Armenia, which inevitably and in a vivid way influenced the commentary of Nalean on Sirach.

The closing section of the second chapter presents a chart where selected chapters of the Armenian text of Sirach have been subjected to a detailed analysis in comparison with the parent texts as well as the English translation of NRSV. The principles directing the selection of chapters as well as the methods of examination are discussed before the chart.

The ***third chapter*** focuses on the only Armenian commentary on Sirach, which was written by Yakob Nalean. The *first* half of the chapter is an outline of Nalean's biography. A general overview is given of the socio-political, cultural and religious context, referring both to the situation in Armenia and also the Armenian communities outside Armenia, which shaped the theology of Nalean and especially his approaches as reflected in his Commentary.

More observation of Nalean's theological as well as hermeneutical views is given in the *second* part of this chapter together with a brief description of the only known extant MSS of the Commentary. The one-line interpretation of each chapter which is an abbreviation of the whole commentary is also included in this chapter.

The ***fourth chapter*** focuses on some major theological themes of Sirach which are treated in light of Nalean's commentary as well as some non-Armenian primary sources.

In the chapter ***Conclusions*** I summarise the outcomes of this research and its contribution to the scholarship of the field.

1.3 Review of Existing Secondary Literature

Unfortunately the academic boost caused by the discoveries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries did not have a corresponding effect on the study of the Armenian translation of Sirach. Only a few articles were written on the subject by two Armenian authors, and a small number of foreign scholars have also touched upon this subject in passing.

As noted, the main issue regarding the Armenian text of Sirach has been its canonicity and the extent of its dependence on each of the two parent translations. Up until the first half of the 20th century, it was generally known that the Armenian Sirach terminates at chapter 42 with some verses from chapter 43 incorporated.[22] However, this supposed certainty was overturned when some fragments from chapters 42–46 were identified in Jerusalem in 1927 by Ełišê Dowrean in an undated MS.[23] In his article called 'Noragiwt glowxner Siraƙay grƙin hin ŧargmanowŧenên' (Newly Discovered chapters of the Old Translation of Sirach), Dowrean says, 'We have no doubts that these chapters are a part of an old translation'. Nevertheless, Dowrean does not think that the chapters are the work of the first translators of the Armenian Bible,[24] relying on the evidence of a few Grabar[25] words which in his view do not resemble the linguistic style of the earliest translators.

The greatest discovery of the Armenian text of Sirach was that of 1966 in the Yerevan MSS depository. In the same year Gevorg Abgaryan published an article[26] in which he set forth new copies of the same chapters discovered by Dowrean and some additional portions of chapters 18–20 which were missing in all other extant MSS. This new MS was exempt from all those linguistic imperfections which occur in the Jerusalem MS. Unfortunately, Abgaryan does not comment on the date of the MS, restricting himself to stating that it is an ancient translation.

One would expect the two remarkable MSS of Jerusalem and Yerevan[27] to have dramatically changed the direction of scholarship and spark greater interest in the Armenian version of Sirach. However, the chapters still remain to be thoroughly examined. With this in mind, these chapters have been included in the

22 Cf. Գիրք Աստուածաշունչ Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց, Ա. Բագրատունի [*Girk' Astowacašownč' Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'* [Scripture of the Old and New Testaments] (ed. A. Bagratowni, Venice 1860); Աստուածաշունչ մատեան Հին եւ Նոր կտակարանաց, Յ. Զօհրապեան [*Astowacašownč' matean Hin ew Nor ktakaranac' Vol. 1* (ed. Y. Zôhrapean, Venice, 1805)].

23 Jer.SJ MS N. 2558, 1615, 369v-381r. The first part of it was copied in the 17th century. However the second part which also contains Sirach is still to be dated.

24 E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Siraƙay grƙin hin ŧargmanowŧenên' [Newly Discovered chapters of the Old Translation of Sirach] in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50.

25 The word 'Grabar' will sometimes be used in this work instead of 'Classical Armenian'.

26 Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նարահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan norahayt hatvacner' [The Newly Found Passages of the Oldest Translation of Sirach] in *Etchmiadzin No. 11–12*, (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60–70].

27 MM. MS N. 5608, 1363, pp. 102r-147v

comparative chart presented in the current thesis. The examination of these chapters is of particular significance as it proves our hypothesis that one or more Armenian translations of Sirach were produced during the first half of the 5th century. It also explicitly demonstrates that at least one of these versions had more than the 42 or 43 chapters preserved in most Armenian MSS.

Michael Stone mentions three criteria for determining the weight allocated to the Armenian version of Biblical texts: the accuracy of the translation, the age of the translation and the state of the Greek text. However, as already mentioned, the Armenian biblical texts, in particular Sirach, have almost always been neglected and considered as 'secondary'.[28] Alexander Di Lella, for example, in his book co-authored with Patrick Skehan, speaks about the textual witnesses of GII and mentions the Armenian translation, but does not give any information about the original source of the Armenian text, which is the Syriac Peshitta, and so the reader of his book gets the impression that the Greek text is the only source of the Armenian.[29] Di Lella also does not specify in his commentary which Armenian translations he is referring to. Nor does he specify, when he says that the Armenian translation is a textual witness of GII, whether the Zôhrapean or Bagratowni version is meant. However, it is well established that these two texts have a variety of sources which sometimes give different readings for certain verses or even entire passages. The Oskanean version is not considered by Di Lella (nor will it be considered here), by reason of its being almost literally translated from the Latin Vulgate. Western scholarship has not yet provided any detailed examination of the sources of the Armenian translation. Of course, a lack of knowledge of Armenian has always been one major reason why this research has been neglected in Western scholarship. Some scholars have sadly assumed certain things to be what they consider 'generally known', rather than undertaking their own deeper research.[30] Having said this, however, I must make honourable mention of the NRSV. In producing the translation of Sirach, the editors of this translation made use of the Armenian alongside other texts. An example of its use is the translation of verse 40:6 'He gets little or no rest; he struggles in his sleep as he did by day'. The NRSV Bible translators relied on the Armenian text of this verse in their translation, since the meaning of the Greek is uncertain.[31] The note in the NRSV edition merely confirms that the meaning of this verse is taken from the Armenian text and does not give a detailed explanation or the reason for using it. But if we examine particularly

28 R. J. Coggins, *Sirach* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p. 38.
29 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', pp. 55 – 56.
30 R. J. Coggins, '*Sirach*', p. 38.
31 Sir. 40:6 in *NRSV Bible* [http://biblia.com/books/nrsv/Sir40.6], Revised 01.08.2012.

the second part of this verse, we can see the following. The Armenian text translates the words ἐνυπνίοις (in sleep) and κοπίᾳ (to work hard) as երազովք and աշխատի, (և յայսմհետէ երազովք իբրև ի տուընջեան աշխատի) 'and after that he toils with dreams as in the day'. The Syriac version does not give any nuances of the meaning and as Henry Wace says, the 'day of watch or of watching' are unintelligible expressions.[32] So the Armenian translation clarifies the meaning: that the period during which he rests is short, lasting a moment; during the rest of the time he is as hard at work as in the daytime, 'Խուն մի իբրեւ զոչինչ ի հանգստեան, եւ յայսմհետէ երազովք իբրեւ ի տուընջեան աշխատի' [Xown mi ibrew zoč'inč' i hangstean, ew yaysmhetê erazovk' ibrew i towənǰean ašxati] (He rests like nothing (very short) and afterwards dreaming (meaning in the night) he works as [hard] as in the daytime).

Addressing the general lack of familiarity with the Armenian translations amongst scholars, Michael Stone in his book 'The Armenian Version of IV Ezra' observes,

> It is interesting to note that even Issaverdens' English translation had virtually no impact on European scholarly circles concerned with the study of the apocryphal literature. Yovsêpeanc's edition [a reprint of Zôhrapean Bible] was mentioned by M.R. James, and he also announced Sarghissian's (then) forthcoming study. Yet Box,[33] in his edition of 1912, does not show knowledge of Issaverdens' English rendering, nor does Violet nor Gry. All these scholars depended for their knowledge of this version not on the learned fathers of Venice, but on the edition known in Europe since the days of A. Helgenfeld.[34]

Recent developments in the study of the Armenian Bible have heightened the need for a new edition. A new committee is set to produce a new edition of the Modern Armenian translation in Etchmiadzin. In this context it is of particular importance to bring together significant MSS and printed editions to establish the most authentic text of Sirach. The six MSS that Norayr Połarean has found in the Library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and which are mentioned by Michael Stone in one of his pamphlets[35], will of course be of great use in this task. These MSS are: MS 410 (N. Połarean, *Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts, II*, Jerusalem, 1967, p. 348), *The Lives of the Fathers*, 1631 C.E. pp. 775; MS 501 (Połarean, *'Grand Catalogue')*, p. 496; Bible, 17th c.

32 H. Wace, '*The Holy Bible with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary*', p. 194.

33 G. H. Box, *The Ezra Apocalypse* (London: Pitman, 1962).

34 M. Stone, *The Armenian Version of IV Ezra* (USA: Michigan, 1979), pp. 4 – 5. Cf. J. Issaverdens, *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament found in the Armenian MSS of the Library of St. Lazarus* (2nd ed. Venice: Mechitarist Press, 1934).

35 M. Stone, *The Apocryphal literature in the Armenian Tradition* (Jerusalem, 1969), p. 62.

Fol. 564r-572r; MS 711 Połarean, *Grand Catalogue of St. James' Manuscripts, III,* Jerusalem, 1968, p. 154; Bible, 1619 C.E. Fol. 96 – 110; MS 724 (Połarean, *'Grand Catalogue'),* p. 187; Bible, 17th c. Foll. 119v-149r; MS 840 (Połarean, *'Grand Catalogue'),* p. 323; Book of Sermons, 1609 C.E. Fol. 514r. All these MSS are listed in Shahé Ajemian's 'Grand Catalogue'.[36]

Stanislas Lyonnet, in his valuable 1950 monograph, discusses the Armenian version of Sirach and concludes that the extreme complexity of the text does not allow one to establish a single source for the Armenian translation. Referring to Heinrich Herkenne,[37] Lyonnet argues that the Zôhrapean text is not close to the Peshitta and is even further from the Latin.[38] At the same time Lyonnet does not single out the Greek text as the main source for Zôhrapean. The lack of the famous transposition of two passages Sir. 30:25 – 33:13a and 33:13b-36:16a in the latter is presented as evidence for this. Another significant theory originating with Lyonnet is his assertion of an Armenian origin for the Georgian translation of the Bible, based on the obscurity of Sirach 4:13 in both Armenian and Georgian.[39]

In Western scholarship, Joseph Ziegler has so far been the most prominent author to examine the Armenian translation with its sources alongside other translations of Sirach.[40] In his passage on the Armenian versions, in order to differentiate the Armenian texts of various revisions, he uses 'Arm 1' for the texts translated before 431 (Council of Ephesus) and 'Arm 2' translated after 431. This differentiation had been put forward by S. Lyonnet.[41] Ziegler also speaks about an 'Arm 3' version which refers to the chapters found in 1927 in Jerusalem by Ełišê Dowrean.[42] He also refers to Oskan's edition without placing it among the three versions, presumably because Oskan's version was translated from the Vulgate and is almost identical with its Latin parent text. Discussing the influence of different sources on the Armenian translations, Ziegler does not an-

36 Շ. Աճեմյան, Ցուցակ Աստուածաշունչ Մատեանի հայերէն ձեռագիրներուն [S. Adjemian, *Ċowċak Astowacašownč' Mateani Hayerên Jer̄agirnerown*] [Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Bible] (Lisbon: C. Gulbenkian Foundation, 1992).

37 H. Herkenne, *De Veteris Latinae Ecclesiastici Capitabus I-XLIII* (Leipzig, 1897), pp. 28 – 33.

38 S. Lyonnet, *Les Origines de la Version arménienne et le Diatessaron* (Biblica et Orientalia 13; Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1950), p. 11.

39 S. Lyonnet, '*Les Origines*', p. 149.

40 *Sapientia Jesu Filii Sirach*, (ed. J. Ziegler, Göttingen, 1965), pp. 33 – 35

41 Cf. S. Lyonnet, '*Les Origines*', p. 10, c. E. Cox, 'The Armenian Translation of the Bible' in *Proceedings of the conference "Where the Only-Begotten Descended: The Church of Armenia Through the Ages"* convened at Ann Arbor, Apr. 1 – 4, 2004 (ed. K. Bardakjian) [unixware.mscc.huji.ac.il/~armenia/articles/ArmBib_tr_AnnArbor.docx], Revised 20.06.2013

42 E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Siraḱay grḱin hin ṫargmanowṫenên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246 – 50.

swer the question: which was the original parent text of the Armenian version of Sirach? The existence in some chapters of the (+) sign which, as said, combines two or even three bicola under one verse makes Ziegler think that Arm 1 used in many places not the Greek text but a totally different source. It could possibly be the Syriac because the (+) sign is characteristic for the Syriac and the Hebrew texts. If in some places Arm 1 resembles the Hebrew text it is not because of a direct dependence on the Hebrew but the influence of the Syriac parent text.[43] Other scholars, such as Di Lella and Stone, have generally used Ziegler's views as a source for certain details concerning the Armenian translation.

This study will show that the Hebrew text of Sirach itself was not a direct source of the Armenian translation. However, its value as a parent text must be taken into consideration when elaborating specifically on the Armenian witness to the Syriac text. In this regard, Zôhrapean's text as well as the study of the MSS that Zôhrapean used in preparing his edition can greatly benefit from using a comparison of Hebrew and Syriac.

It is difficult to come to a general conclusion regarding the textual sources of Sirach in Armenian as to which exact original text was used as a parent text. Claude Cox correctly points to this in the case of the whole Armenian translation of the Bible: 'Arm 1 and Arm 2 are not necessarily two distinct stages. There is a tendency to think of Arm 1 as Syriac-based and Arm 2 as a Greek-based revision of that earlier Syriac-based work of translation. But the textual situation is more complex than that'.[44] The correct order of the misplaced chapters in some ancient Armenian MSS proves that there was a version which was influenced by Syriac and not the Greek translation, which predates Codex 248.

One of the reasons why the Armenian translation has not yet been adequately examined in the West is that this version itself has numerous unresolved problems.[45] However, as in the case of Sir. 40:6, discussed above, even in this state some scholars regarded the Armenian text as an important witness and tool for solving some textual obscurities in meaning in the Greek text.

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43 J. Ziegler, *'Sapientia'*, p. 36. Cf. C. Cox, *Hexaplaric Materials Preserved in The Armenian Version* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

44 C. E. Cox, 'The Armenian Translation of the Bible' in *Proceedings of the conference "Where the Only-Begotten Descended: The Church of Armenia Through the Ages"* convened at Ann Arbor, Apr. 1 – 4, 2004 (ed. K. Bardakjian) [unixware.mscc.huji.ac.il/~armenia/articles/ArmBib_tr_AnnArbor.docx], Revised 20.06.2013

45 The lack of the final eight chapters in the Armenian text as well as the many abbreviations and additions in Zôhrapean and Bagratowni texts and in single MSS are yet to be critically assessed.

The uncertainties regarding many issues show the urgent need for a critical edition of this book. This would entail referring to all extant MSS containing Sirach, dividing them according to the several families of MSS, and comparing them with the parent texts. Only after such an edition has been completed, will one be able to argue with certainty concerning textual and intertextual analysis of the Armenian Sirach, and only this kind of research can answer the question as to which families of the parent text the Armenian translation is a witness.

1.4 The Name of the Author and the Date of the Book of Sirach

The name of this book is preserved in a variety of versions depending on the language and the sources of translation (for secondary translations). The expanded Hebrew version of the name mentioned by the auther himself in Sir. 50:27 is 'Yeshuah ben Eliazar ben Sira' (Yeshua son of Eliazar son of Sira). Some Hebrew MSS have a short version of this 'Hokma Ben Sira' (Wisdom of Ben Sira) or simply 'Ben Sira'. The Greek MSS have it as 'Sophia Iesou uiou Sirach' (Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sirach), or the short version: 'Sophia Sirach' (Wisdom of Sirach). The longer version is also used in the Septuagint. The Latin title differs significantly from that in Hebrew and Greek: 'Ecclesiasticus' which is translated as the 'Church Book'. The first use of this title is generally attributed to St. Cyprian (3rd c.), and presumably came about because of its frequent use in the churches for teaching purposes. Oesterley also mentions a second relatively less known name in Latin: 'Proverbs of Ben Sira', which, he assumes, derives from Jerome's preface to the Vulgate. Jerome speaks about a Hebrew copy of Sirach which had the title 'Parabolae', i.e. 'Proverbs [of Ben Sira]'.[46] The reason for calling the book 'Parabolae' could be the links between Sirach and the book of Proverbs. Richard Coggins speaks about St. Cyprian's *Testimonia ad Quirinum 2.1* where the latter connects Prov. 8 with Sir. 24 in order to strengthen his argument that Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God.[47] Also, the occasional attribution of Sirach to Solomon, which is found also in the Arm. MS 7 at the John Rylands library in Manchester, could be another reason behind this form of the name.

In all the extant Arm. MSS the name of the Book of Sirach appears in one of the following forms: 1. Girkʻ Sirakʻay, or kočʻi/kočʻecʻo Yesow (The Book of Sirach

46 Cf. Oesterley, W. O. E., *An Introduction to the Books of Apocrypha* (London: S.P.C.K. 1935), p. 224.

47 R. J. Coggins, '*Sirach*', p. 15.

that is called Joshua), 2. Imastowtʻiwn Yesoway Ordwoy Isakʻaray (Wisdom of Joshua, the Son of Isakar), 3. Xrat Imastowtʻean mardkan i banicʻ Sirakʻay (Teaching of Wisdom for people from the words of Sirach), 4. Imastowtʻiwn Sirakʻay Imastasiriʻ arʻ hnazandeal ordi (The Wisdom of Sirach the Wise addressed to an obedient son). As in the case of other translations, there are shorter versions for the title in Armenian as well. This is especially true for all the printed editions, which have either 'Imastowtʻiwn Sirakʻay' (Wisdom of Sirach) or simply 'Sirakʻ' (Sirach).

The issues related to the date of the book of Sirach have been discussed by most scholars who have ever written anything about the book. The dates proposed range from the beginning of the 2nd century BCE to one century earlier, i. e. the beginning of the 3rd century BCE. Reading the Prologue of Sirach written by the book's first translator, the grandson of the author, one might initially think that its date can be easily determined. But the ongoing controversies show that it is not as easy as it may look at the outset. In the Prologue, the translator states that he came to Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of the king Euergetes and after spending sleepless nights he translated his grandfather's book from Hebrew into Greek. We also read in the 50th chapter of the book about the son of Onias or Johanan[48] Simon the High Priest. It is already known from the history of Israel that there was not one Euergetes but two: Euergetes I (Ptolemy III) and Euergetes II (Ptolemy VII) and there were two high priests with the name Simon or Simeon in the relevant period of the 3rd - 2nd centuries BCE.

Thus, Simeon I the son of Onias, was the high priest in approximately 300 – 270 BCE, Simeon II the son of Onias approximately 225 – 200 BCE, [49] Euergetes I (Ptolemy III) 246 – 221 BCE and Euergetes II (Ptolemy VII known also as Physcon) 170 – 164 and 146 – 117.[50] It is obvious from the most preliminary research that the translator of the book could not have come to Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Euergetes I simply because the latter reigned only 25 years. So the majority of scholars agree that Euergetes II (Ptolemy VII) must be the king who is mentioned in the book and if we deduct thirty-eight years from 170 we are left with 132. Thus, the translation of the book was after 132 BCE. There are other scholars, though, who do not agree with this date. For example, John Hart's opinion is that it is absolutely impossible that the translation was done

48 Both names refer to one person because in some Greek manuscripts it is Onias and in some Johanan, cf. P. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (USA: Yale University 2010), p. 9.

49 Alternatively 196 BCE, cf. R. J. Coggins, '*Sirach*', p. 19.

50 W. O. E., Oesterley, '*An Introduction to the Books of Apocrypha*', p. 225.

during the reign of Euergetes II because this king hated foreigners and it is hardly likely that anyone could come to Egypt during his reign and translate a Jewish book into Greek and spread it.[51] Hart also says that in the Egyptian dating system each king's era starts with the first year of his reign and ends with his death. However, Hart adds that Ptolemy Euergetes I came to power in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, i. e. the first year of the reign of Euergetes I was counted as the thirty-eighth year of the era of Ptolemy Philadelphus rather than the first year of his own reign. If we follow Hart's argument then we arrive at the year 247 BCE for the translation and accordingly around 300 BCE for its original composition by Ben Sira. Oesterley responds astutely to Hart's statement with an interesting question, 'If, according to the common Egyptian mode of reckoning, each king inaugurated his own era, why, in speaking of a particular king, should not the first year of his era be so designated, instead of being described as the last year of his predecessor's era'?[52]

If we were to accept that the king mentioned in the Prologue was Euergetes I instead of Euergetes II and the high priest in the 50th chapter was Simon I, then it may make more sense. However, the two facts remain: that the king Euergetes I did not reign as long as thirty-eight years; and also that Simon I could not be praised in the book of Sirach. These finally demonstrate that Hart's statement is incorrect. Why Simon I (the Just), mentioned by Josephus, is not the high priest Simon from the 50th chapter of Sirach, is answered by some old Hebrew manuscripts. Josephus tells us about Onias the high priest 'who was a son of Simon, called the Just'.[53] Unfortunately, we cannot guess from Josephus' passage whether it is Simon I or Simon II who is called the Just. However, some nuances found in rabbinic traditions may shed light on this question. According to these traditions preserved in rabbinic literature (Tosephta Sotah xiii. 6 – 8, Jerus. Talmud Yoma 43 c, Bab. Talmud Yoma 39 a, b, Menahot 109 b) the high priest Onias who built a temple in Egypt was the son of Simon the Just, and again according to the same traditions Simon the Just is not Simon I but Simon II.[54] This is one more very strong testimony which shows us that Simon the high priest mentioned in Sirach is Simon II the Just. Although in some parts of his history Jose-

51 J. H. A. Hart, *Ecclesiasticus: The Greek Text of Codex 248* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), pp. 253 – 6.

52 W. O. E. Oesterley, '*The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach or Ecclesiasticus*', (London: Haymarket, 1916), p. xxii.

53 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books XII-XIII* (ed. G.P. Goold, transl. by Ralph Marcus, London: 1998), p. 38.

54 Josephus, '*Jewish Antiquities*', p. 465.

phus gives dates not of a particular king but of a whole dynasty[55] it does not mean that he also mixes up the eras and the dates of the preceding and succeeding kings.

The same is the case with the translator of Sirach: although he speaks about a time when the exact dates of the king's reign cannot be verified, he could not speak about the years, i. e. the era of one king (Euergetes II, Ptolemy VII) actually having in his mind the years of another (Euergetes I Ptolemy VII). Alexander Di Lella in his book co-authored with Patrick Skehan[56] examines the Greek word 'epi' (επί). He argues against U. Wilcken's statement that the use of the word 'epi' before the name of the king and the exact mentioned date (thirty-eighth year) means that king was no longer alive when the book was translated. Indeed, this cannot be convincing because, as R. Smend says and Di Lella agrees, the word 'epi' is used also in other books of the Bible with exact dates, for example, in Hag. 1:1 or Zech. 1:1 and it does not mean that the kings mentioned in those verses were no longer alive. Going further, Alexander Di Lella again refers to Smend saying that the participle 'synchronisas'[57] (while I was there, at the same time) may also be understood as 'while I was there for the reminder of his reign'.[58] Thus, Di Lella ends up with a statement that the Prologue of the Book of Sirach was written after the king's death (117 BCE).[59]

With all due respect for Di Lella's contribution to the scholarship on Sirach, I have to disagree with him at this point. I find it unreasonable to argue for a date after 117 BCE, having in mind that the word 'synchronisas' can be perfectly well understood as the time period between 132 BCE when the translator arrived in Egypt and 117 BCE when the king died. Just relying on an assumption that a period after his arrival could also mean that the king was dead is not enough for a strong argument. And even if we try to place the date of the Prologue after 117 BCE then another question arises inevitably as to why the translator does not mention instead the name of the next king. Thus, only the Prologue makes it obvious that the translation was done before the next king's enthronement, and we can definitely state that both the actual translation and the Prologue were written over a period of 15 years and before 117 BCE.

55 Josephus, '*Jewish Antiquities*', p. 125.
56 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 9.
57 In Di Lella's book it is 'synchonisas' but the right word is 'synchronisas' (συγχρονίσας).
58 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 9.
59 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 9.

1.5 Sirach and Hellenism

At the dawn of the 2nd century, Hellenistic tradition with its various kinds of philosophical movements and of course the Greek language itself were gradually attaining a dominant role in Egypt and Palestine. This is the time when the Jewish sage Ben Sira wrote his Book of Wisdom. It has always been a matter of interest among biblical scholars whether Ben Sira was against the Hellenisation of the Jews or whether he rather tolerated Hellenism. In reality, the book of Sirach was translated into Greek in order 'to help outsiders'[60] which is one evidence of the expansion of the Greek tradition in the 3rd and 2nd centuries. There is another question whether the translation was done for the Jews outside Palestine or for all those who were interested in Hebrew wisdom. Tcherikover[61] insists that Sirach's wisdom is pure Hebrew and against Hellenistic tradition. John Collins on the other hand, referring to O. Wischmeyer says, 'Indicative of Ben Sira's embedment in Hellenistic social mores is the inclusion of a treatise on behaviour at banquets in 31:12 – 32:13'.[62] I think that the passage he identifies is purely teaching on etiquette and it is no more Hellenistic than it is Jewish. Alexander Di Lella rightly says, 'The advice given here is, in general, what is dictated by good manners and courtesy'.[63] There are many places in the Bible where different people speak about good manners in e. g., consuming food etc. For instance Prov. 23:29 – 35 speaks against those who linger late over wine and those who keep trying mixed wines. There is also an interesting nuance about a Jewish custom concerning the etiquette of family meals in 1 Samuel 6:11 which clearly shows that the teaching in Sir. 31:12 – 32:13 is a general guidance for behaviour and does not have to be particularly Hellenistic. Putting it in Martin Hengel's words we can say that Ben Sira's wisdom 'echoes' but does not represent Hellenistic culture.[64] In that sense it could be influenced by Hellenistic thought but at the same time it could merely represent the dominant Jewish approach of the time to the different issues discussed in his book.

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60 Sir. Prologue.

61 V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 143.

62 J. J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), p. 32.

63 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 388.

64 M. Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period, Vol. 1 (London: SCM Press and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 149. Cf. J. Sanders, '*Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*', pp. 54 – 5. Sanders disagrees with this idea of Hengel's, asserting that in making this statement Hengel did not look at the similarities of Ben Sira with Theognis.

The translator of the Book, who as we know is the grandson of the author, is even suspicious about the quality of translations of the Law and the prophetic books from Hebrew because he thinks that 'what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have exactly the same sense when translated into another language'.[65] He does not explicitly tell the reader whether or not his grandfather was interested in Hellenistic or any other kind of Wisdom literature. Hence, judging just from the Prologue, Ben Sira was only interested in the Jewish Law, Prophetic literature and 'the other books of our ancestors'. The only window left for us to assume that Ben Sira used foreign wisdom literature is his text itself, which clearly praises wisdom and knowledge in general, regardless its national origin.[66] Israelites were acquainted with the wisdom of many nations. Apart from Egyptian and Babylonian cultures, Oesterley mentions also Syrian, Arabian and Edomite literature as sources of Jewish wisdom tradition.[67]

Very valuable research on this subject has been carried out by Jack Sanders in the second chapter of his book, 'Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom'.[68] He draws many parallels between Egyptian, Greek and other writings and Ben Sira saying, 'Like the sages before him [Ben Sira], he was open to taking over a good idea from any source, as long as he could agree with it'.[69] Di Lella adds to this,

> ...though Ben Sira utilized foreign authors, what he writes comes out as something completely his own, and accordingly must be described as something thoroughly Jewish and compatible with earlier biblical thought and sentiment. This is why his maxims, even when they may parallel material from Theognis and Phibis,[70] have more the spirit and tenor of the Book of Proverbs than of either pagan source.[71]

That the ancient Hebrew wisdom tradition was influenced by that of Egypt, Babylon etc., can be implied also from the following. Josephus recounts that King Ptolemy Philadelphus in order to enrich his library in Alexandria asked the High Priest of the Jews Eliazar to send to Egypt six wise and aged men from each Jewish tribe to translate the Jewish Law into Greek.[72] It is hard to believe that only Egyptians were interested in Jewish literature and it is more than ob-

65 Sir., Prologue.
66 Sir. 39:4.
67 W. O. E. Oesterley, '*An Introduction to the Books of Apocrypha*', pp. 45 – 6.
68 J. T. Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom* (California: Scholars Press, 1983), pp. 27 – 59. Cf. M. J. Goff, 'Ben Sira and Papyrus Insinger' in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality, Vol. 1* (ed. C. A. Evans, H. D. Zacharias, London: T & T Clark, 2009), pp. 54 – 64.
69 J. T. Sanders, '*Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*', p. 59.
70 Sanders shows that Ben Sira read and used some of the poems of Theognis as well as Phibis.
71 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 50.
72 Josephus, '*Jewish Antiquities*', pp. 25 – 7.

vious that Hebrew literature and in our case Wisdom literature was, if not greatly, at least partially influenced by the literature of others. The statement by Ben Sira in 34:11, 'He that has travelled acquires much cleverness' displays the attitude of the author towards foreign cultures and their importance for the enrichment of one's insight.

No doubt, among all the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, the book of Sirach is the most Jewish composition if we may describe it so. However, it would not be correct to deny that it was influenced by Hellenic tradition and on the other hand that the Hebrew Wisdom tradition itself influenced the traditions of neighbouring countries.

2 The Armenian Version of Sirach

2.1 The Translation of the Book of Sirach and its Inclusion in the Canon of the Armenian Bible (*The Earliest Translations of the Bible into Armenian)*

The question of the canonicity of the books in the Armenian Bible has always been a matter of importance, to the extent that Łazar P'arpec'i, a 5th century scholar, in his letter addressed to Vahan Mamikonean calls 'unlearned' all those who do not know the names and the number of all the books contained in the Bible.[73]

Our information about the earliest translations of the Bible comes from two historians of the 5th century, Koriwn and Movsês Xorenac'i. Both were disciples of St. Mesrop Maštoc' who created the Armenian alphabet and oversaw the first translations. They relate that there were two successive translations of the Holy Bible. The prominent 20th century scholar Hakob Anasyan has established that,

> The first one, which was done partly from the Syriac and partly from the Greek texts, was produced in the period between 405–6 AD, when Armenians created the alphabet, and the Council of Ephesus (431 AD). The second translation was a revision of the previous one with amendments from the new Greek text brought from Byzantium straight after the Council of Ephesus.[74]

The first question is which books of the Bible were included in the first translation? Koriwn describes this translation as follows:

> And starting the translation of the Scriptures first they translated the Proverbs of Solomon which right from the beginning commands: "For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight".[75] At that time our blessed and wonderful land of Armenia became truly worthy of admiration, where by the hands of two colleagues, suddenly, in an instant, Moses, the law-giver, along with the order of the prophets, energetic Paul with

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73 Ղազար Փարպեցի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց եւ Թուղթ առ Վահան Մամիկոնեան [Łazar P'arpec'i, *Patmowtiwn Hayoc ew Ťowłt ar Vahan Mamikonean*] [The History of Armenia and the Letter to Vahan Mamikonean] (eds. G. Ter-Mkrtč'ean, S. Malxasean, Tbilisi, 1904), p. 201.

74 Հ. Անասյան, Հայկական մատենագիտություն [H. Anasyan, '*Haykakan Matenagitowtyown*', p. 308].

75 Կորյուն, Վարք Մաշտոցի [Koriwn, *Vark' Maštoc'I*] [The Life of Maštoc'](ed. M. Abełyan, Yerevan, 1983), p. 98.

> the entire phalanx of the apostles, along with Christ's world-sustaining gospel, became Armenian-speaking.[76]

Koriwn does not list all the books of the Bible, and one might infer that Maštocʻ translated only certain books. But, in saying 'Moses, the law-giver, along with the order of the prophets' Koriwn apparently meant all the books from the Pentateuch to the Prophecies, since he also mentions only the first and last books of the New Testament. (Revelation would certainly be omitted since it did not form part of the Armenian canon before the 12th Century). He does not mention the book of Acts, yet there is no reason to doubt that it was translated as part of the biblical canon. Koriwn has already mentioned the book of Proverbs, yet he does not include this book either in the list of translated books.

Movsês Xorenacʻi sheds more light on this problem: 'And immediately they embarked on the translation accordingly starting from the Proverbs and including the 22 known ones and the New Testament'.[77] Here Xorenacʻi is clearly referring to the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament, according to which the Old Testament consists of 22 books, counting each of the following as one book: Judges and Ruth; 1 Kings and 2 Kings; 3 Kings and 4 Kings; Jeremiah and Lamentations; the Twelve minor prophets; 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles; 2 Ezra and 3 Ezra (Nehemiah).[78] The use of the Hebrew canon in Armenia is most probably explained by the use of the Peshittha, which was translated from Hebrew. St. Jerome in his Preface to the Vulgate (Prologus Galeatus) supports the Hebrew canon: 'whatever is outside of these is set aside among the apocrypha. Therefore, Wisdom, which is commonly ascribed to Solomon, and the book of Jesus son of Sirach... are not in the canon'.[79] Although Sirach was frequently quoted in the Talmud and other rabbinic works it was not included in the Hebrew canon, being regarded as having been composed too late.[80]

According to the Armenian, as well as some other church traditions these first 22 books are called canonical (Naxakanon [Նախականոն]) and the rest of the books are known as Deuterocanonical (Erkrordakanon

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76 Կորյուն, Վարք Մաշտոցի [Koriwn, '*Vark' Maštocʻi*', p. 104].

77 Մովսէս Խորենացի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց [Movsês Xorenacʻi, *Patmowtʻiwn Hayocʻ* (Tbilisi, 1913), p. 327].

78 Հ. Անասյան, Հայկական մատենագիտություն [H. Anasyan, '*Haykakan Matenagitowłyown*', pp. 311–12].

79 Jerome, *The Prologue to the Book of Kings in Vulgate* [http://www.bombaxo.com/blog/?p=218], Revised 10.03.2012.

80 D. J. Harrington, 'The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Early Church and Today' in *The Canon Debate* (eds. M. McDonald, E. J. Sanders, USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), pp. 196–210.

[Երկրորդականոն]) books. We must not however confuse these 'deuterocanonical' books with the apocryphal (or non-biblical) books. Eusebius of Caesarea in his 'Chronicle', the second part of which is preserved in its entirety only in Armenian,[81] considers the Book of Sirach alongside Wisdom as 'controverted' books. But having in mind the quotations of Eusebius from Baruch and Wisdom, Brooke Westcott suggests that 'he [Eusebius] regarded the '*Apocrypha*' of the Old Testament in the same light as the books in the New Testament, which were 'controverted and yet familiarly used by many'.[82] The deuterocanonical books long ago gained canonicity in some traditional churches and now are an inseparable part of the Bible.[83]

The second phase of translation started after the Council of Ephesus, when the disciples of Mesrop Maštocʻ and Sahak Partʻew brought from Byzantium to Armenia the Caesarean version of the Greek Septuagint. It was at this time that, in addition to the revision of the old version, the deuterocanonical books were translated. Koriwn has this to say:

> Yet blessed Sahak, who had rendered from the Greek language into Armenian all the ecclesiastical books and the wisdom of the church fathers, once more undertook, with Eznak, the comparison of the former random, hurriedly done translations from the then-available copies with the authentic copies.[84]

It is not possible to discern from Koriwn's words which Greek text was used for the new translation, but we know from Xorenacʻi that Maštocʻ's and Sahak's disciples brought back the papers and the six canons[85] approved by the Council of

81 J. Karst, 'The Armenian Version of Eusebius' Chronicon' in *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol 20, No. 2 (1916), pp. 295–7.

82 B. F. Westcott, *The Bible in the Church: A Popular Account of the Collection and Reception of the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Churches* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1896), p. 153.

83 Justin Martyr (2nd c. C.E.) lets us know that there had been books in the Septuagint translation later removed by some Jewish rabbis (St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ch. 72). It is not certain though whether he speaks about the deuterocanonical books or some other apocryphal books which were removed later by some Christian Churches as well. The Roman Catholic Church accepted the deuterocanonical books, officially including them in Jerome's Vulgate. It is difficult to define the earliest date when the Armenian Church accepted these books but it is clear that it happened no later than the first half of the 5th century.

84 Կորյուն, Վարք Մաշտոցի [Koriwn, '*Varkʻ Maštocʻi*', p. 124].

85 Xorenacʻi does not say eight canons instead of six, because the last two canons as Dioscorus of Alexandria said and J. Stevenson mentioned in his book are not properly a canon but determination (ὅρος) J. Stevenson, *Creeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents illustrative of history of the Church C.E. 337–461* (London: S.P.C.K. 1966), p. 296–97.

Ephesus and the authentic example of the Holy Scriptures. Sahak the Great and Maštocʻ, accepting this sample of the Scriptures, one more time translated the Pʻowtʻanaki (translated from Peshitta) version adding to that the new version.[86]

The testimonies of Koriwn and Xorenacʻi show that there were two translations of the Bible though in some cases only the first version was preserved. Today in the libraries we can find manuscripts preserving two different versions of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Sirach. The two versions of the translation of Sirach have been published, the first by Fr. Yôvhannês Zôhrapean in 1805 and the second by Fr. Arsên Bagratowni in 1860.

Bagratowni considered these two editions of Sirach to be Sahak-Mesropian's first and second translations,[87]and this view is also followed by Nersês Akinean.[88] However, this has been a matter of dispute.

2.2 Dating the First Translation of the Book of Sirach

In his edition of the Bible, Yôvhannês Zôhrapean placed the Book of Sirach not in its conventional place after the Wisdom of Solomon but after the New Testament. He explains this by saying that this order is followed in the oldest manuscripts of the Armenian Bible and hence 'we did not regret to leave the Wisdom of Sirach out of the list'.[89] Zôhrapean goes even further, asserting that the linguistic style of the Book of Sirach suggests that it was neither translated by the Holy Translators (Sahak and Mesrop) nor even by their youngest disciples, but dates from the earliest to the 12th C.[90] He does not say explicitly but apparently thinks that this translation was done at the same time as the Book of Revelation, when some Armenian scholars, on comparing the Armenian canon with the Greek and Latin canons, saw that this book was missing from the Armenian

86 Ա. Բագրատունի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց [Movsês Xorenacʻi, '*Patmowtʻiwn Hayocʻ*', p. 343].

87 Ա. Բագրատունի, Իմաստութիւն Յեսուայ որդւոյ Սիրաքայ և թուղթ Երեմիայ Մարգարէի առ գերեալսն ի Բաբիլոն [A. Bagratowni, *Imastowtʻiwn Yesoway ordwoy Sirakay ew tʻowłtʻ Eremiay Margarêi arʻ gerealsn i Babilon* [Wisdom of Joshua Son of Sirach and The Letter of Prophet Jeremiah to the Captives of Babylon] (Venice, 1878), pp. 6–8].

88 Ն. Ակինեան, Սուրբ Գրքի հայերէն թարգմանութիւնը [N. Akinian, 'Sowrb grkʻi hayerên tʻargmanowtʻiwnə' [The Armenian Translation of the Holy Bible] in *Handes amsoreay* (Tbilisi, 1935), pp. 560–1].

89 Աստուածաշունչ Նատեան Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownčʻ Matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranacʻ Vol. 1* (ed. Y. Zôhrapean, Venice, 1805), p. 8].

90 Աստուածաշունչ Նատեան Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownčʻ Matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranacʻ Vol. 1* (ed. Y. Zôhrapean, Venice, 1805), p. 8].

canon. However, Zôhrapean did not have access to all the extant versions of the Armenian translation and his statement can be easily refuted, because references to the Book of Sirach were already appearing in the 10th century works of Xosrov Anjevacʻi and St. Grigor Narekacʻi.[91]

The second editor of the Armenian Bible, Arsên Bagratowni, on the contrary argues that Sirach was translated in the 5th century. His argument is that the style of the language, contrary to the assertions of Yôvhannês Zôhrapean, resembles very closely the classical style that was used by the translators of the 5th century. He states that the MSS he has are copies from the 5th century texts, and accordingly places the Book of Sirach after the Wisdom of Solomon and before Job.[92] This position is also held by the German scholar, Emil Kautzsch, who considers the Armenian translation of Sirach as one of the oldest and best translations. His argument is that it is close to the 5th century Greek text[93] and we can infer from what he says that, again, the language that was unique to the first translators is found also in the translation of Sirach.

In 1927 another Armenian scholar, Ełišê Dowrean, published an article in the journal *'Sion'* in Jerusalem, in which he claimed to have found the oldest preserved examples of the translation of Sirach cc. 42–46. Dowrean does not dispute that Sirach in general was translated into Armenian in the 5th c. but he moves its date to the last quarter of the century: 'There is no doubt that the chapters we published are part of the oldest translation. We think that Sirach was translated in the last quarter of the 5th century, because its language is poorer in comparison with the translation of the Book of Proverbs'.[94] To support his assertion Dowrean relies on some Grabar words such as 'մտածութիւ – mtacowtʻiwn in 3:26[95], բարեբանել – barebanel in 22:19, իմացութիւն – imacʻowtʻiwn in 39:41'. These are compound complicated words penetrated into Armenian from later Hellenic literature, to express complex concepts. For example

91 Գրիգոր Նարեկացի, Grigor Narekacʻi, *Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart*, (trans. T. J. Samuelian, Yerevan: Vem Press, 2002), p. 99.

92 Գիրք Աստուածաշունչ Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց [*Girkʻ Astowacašowncʻ Hin ew Nor Ktakaranacʻ* (ed. A. Bagratowni, Venice, 1860), pp. 681–704].

93 Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirakʻi grkʻi hnagowyn tʻargmanowtʻyan norahayt hatvacnerʼ in *Etchmiadzin No. 11–12*, (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60–70, E]. Kautzsc, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudeptgraphen des Alten Testaments, B 1* (Tubingen, 1900) p. 249.

94 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grkin hin tʻargmanowtʻenênʼ in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), p. 246].

95 Some verse references in the Armenian translation differ from those in the English. The differences will be examined in the comparative chart.

‘բարեբանել’ means ‘to say a word of glorification’ and is used instead of the more common word to ‘to glorify’.

About forty years after this discovery of Dowrean, manuscript specialist Gevork Abgaryan found the same chapters 42–46 of Sirach as well as some fragments of chs. 18–20 in the Yerevan Matenadaran manuscript N. 5608. Soon after examining the text and comparing it with Dowrean’s text, Abgaryan claimed that he had found the oldest Armenian text of Sirach, stating that his text is a copy of the oldest Armenian translation of this book. Before being transferred to Yerevan Matenadaran the manuscript used to be a part of the collection of Vaspurakan Ktucʻ monastery and then the Etchmiadzin depository. Interestingly, none of the manuscript catalogues of these depositories gives information regarding the text of Sirach being part of this manuscript. The reason for this could be the lack of a title page on page 102r of the manuscript where the Book of Sirach begins. The quality of this text without doubt allows us to conclude that it is indeed a copy of a 5th century original text. Its language resembles that of other biblical books translated in the 5th century and is almost free of the compound complicated words and phrases which occur in later manuscripts. If we accept the authenticity of this text, then we can assume that at least one of the verses unique to the Armenian text, which is found between Sir. 20:28 and 20:29, and which we discuss under a separate title, is authentic and not a later addition: ‘Որդեա՛կ՝ պահեա՛ զբանս իմ, եւ խելամուտ լեր ի դմա՛ ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, զի եւ որդի հարազատ եւ ժառանգ մեծազգի որ զնախնեացն զմեծանձնութիւն ո՛չ նորոգէ եւ յառաջ բերէ՝ ամօթ մե՛ծ եւ նախատինք է նա հաւուց իւրոց, եւ անէծք նորոգ’ [Ordea՛k՝ pahea՛ zbans im, ew xelamowt ler i dma՛ i towê ew i gišeri, zi ew ordi harazat ew žaŕang mecazgi or znaxneaćn zmecanjnowťiwn oչ՛ norogê ew yaŕaǰ berê՝ amôť me՛c ew naxatinǩ ê na hawowć iwroć, ew anêcǩ norog] (My child, keep my words and ponder over them day and night, for even one’s own son, heir of a noble family, if he does not renew and develop his ancestors’ honour, then he becomes a shame and reproach and a new curse for his fathers).

Unlike Dowrean, who is convinced that Sirach was translated in the last quarter of the 5th century, Abgaryan is sure that the text he found dates to no later than the first quarter of the same century. At the same time he does not undertake any deeper research apart from examining some vocabulary and the general textual style of his manuscript.

Some arguments against Sirach being translated in the 5th century were presented by Covakan in an article published in the 1936 edition of *'Sion'*.[96] His arguments are as follows:

1. There is no reading from Sirach in the Lectionary of the Armenian Church.
2. It is often found as a volume in itself, separate from the Bible, as if it was just a book of moral principles.
3. It is not found in the 'old' manuscripts of the Armenian translation of the Bible but in the 'new' ones.
4. In the Church canons of the Council of Partaw, summoned by the Catholicos Sion (8th c.), the Book of Sirach is mentioned as a non-canonical book after the canonical books of the Old Testament.[97]

Covakan concludes that the book of Sirach was not a part of the Armenian canon until the 17th century when Oskan Erewancʻi, translating it from the Latin Vulgate, placed it after the Wisdom of Solomon. Consequently, both Mxitʻar Sebastacʻi and Arsên Bagratowni followed this order in their editions.[98]

It is true that some of the Armenian lectionaries do not contain any passages from Sirach, but this is not true of all of them. For example in a lectionary dated to the 11th-12th c. (which was also used in preparation for the first ever Armenian online lectionary by Tom Samuelian and Garegin Hambardzumyan) there is a reading from the 11th chapter of Sirach which is read on the feast of the Transfiguration.[99] Interestingly, it is not a peculiarity of the Armenian tradition to have a reading from Sirach on this feast. In the Syriac lectionary of Mardin a similar reading is allocated for the same feast.[100]

Regarding the second point raised by Covakan we can again refer to the Syriac tradition and see that in the same way Sirach was sometimes found separately, not only in complete Bibles, and copied in manuscripts called Beth

96 Ծովականը Նորայր Պողարյանի կեղծանունն է [Covakan is the pseudonym of Abp. Norayr Połarean]

97 Ծովական, Սիրաքայ հին թարգմանութիւնները [Covakan, 'Sirakʻay hin hay ṫargmanowṫiwnnerə' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 153].

98 Ծովական, Սիրաքայ հին թարգմանութիւնները [Covakan, 'Sirakʻay hin hay ṫargmanowṫiwnnerə', p. 151].

99 There were no readings from Sirach in the earliest lectionaries of Jerusalem (cf. Armenian Translation of Jerusalem 121). Most probably the earliest inclusion of this book in some lectionaries took place in the late 10th -11th centuries. [http://www.arak29.am/breviary/index.php?year=2013&month=07&day=12&content=home], Revised 26.03.2013.

100 W. van Peursen, 'Ben Sira in the Syriac Tradition' in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira: Transmission and Interpretation* (ed. J. Rey and J. Joosten, Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 143–65.

Mawtbē alongside Qoheleth, Song of Songs, Job and some other books of the OT the canonicity of which has never been disputed. In the medieval Armenian tradition both the Book of Proverbs and Qoheleth have been copied in separate manuscripts too. Similar manuscripts can be found at Yerevan Matenadaran depository and Jerusalem St. James' library.

Apparently, Covakan did not have access to some ancient manuscripts which contain the Book of Sirach. It is not clear which manuscripts he considered 'the old ones' and which 'the new ones' but in almost all the manuscripts used by Arsên Bagratowni, the Book of Sirach was a part of the canon. Covakan did not mention any manuscripts, simply asserting that Sirach was non-canonical, but Zôhrapean in his preface clearly tells us that the earliest manuscript he knows to contain Sirach dates from the 8th century.[101]

The clearest evidence for an early date for the translation of Sirach comes from examining references from this book in other works. The earliest and most fascinating evidence is found in the ancient Armenian translations of the homilies of St. John Chrysostom which I discuss in the passage on the references to Sirach in the Medieval Armenian and translated literature.

Norayr Połarean has carried out research on the references from Sirach in the canons of the [Կանոնագիրք հայոց] '*Kanonagirk' hayoc'*' (The Armenian Book of Canons). He particularly examined the groups of canons which are widely known as [Երկրորդ Առաքելական կամ Կղեմէսի] '*Erkrord Arak'elakan kam Kłemêsi*' (The [Second] Apostolic or Clement's Canons), [Կանոնք Հարանց Հետևողաց] '*Kanonk' Haranc' Hetewołac'*', (The Canons of the Post-Apostolic Fathers) and the canons of the Council of Partaw (768/771 C.E.), which was mentioned earlier. The following three points are the most interesting from what Połarean says: 'In none of the three groups of canons are mentioned the books of the New Testament: in none of them is mentioned the Book of Esther and finally in all three groups the Book of Sirach is placed at the end of the Old Testament.' After examining the first two points Norayr Połarean concludes about the third:

> It is highly unlikely that this appendix that we find in these groups of canons and especially in the canons of the Council of Partaw was a part of the Apostolic Canon and I think that

101 Աստուածաշնունչ մատեան Հին եւ Նոր կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownč' Matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac' Vol. 1* (ed. Y. Zôhrapean, Venice, 1805), p. 21]. Unfortunately, this MS is found neither in Venice Mechitarist library nor anywhere else. We assume that Zôhrapean had it at his disposal while producing his edition; however, eventually it was lost.

it was added to the group later by a scribe and others just copied from that. Thus, it cannot represent the position of the Armenian Church.[102]

The following comparison of the 85th canon of the Apostolic canons with the later canons adopted by the Armenian Church can possibly shed light on the problems that Norayr Połarean outlines above:

Եղիցի ձեզ ամենեցուն եկեղեցականաց եւ աշխարհականաց պաշտել Գիրք Սուրբք Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց՝ Մովսէսի գիրք՝
Ծննդոց, Ելից, Ղեւտական, Թիւք, Երկրորդ օրէնք. Յեսու Նաւեայ, Դատաւորք, Հռութ, Թագաւորութեանցն Դ, Մնացորդացն գիր Բ, Եզրի բանք Բ, Յոբ Ա, Սաղմոսաց գիրք Ա, Սողոմոնի գիրք Ա, Եսայի, Երեմիա, Եզեկիէլ, Դանիէլ, *եւ արտաքուստ պատգամաւորեսցի առ ի յուսուցանել զձեր մանկունս զուսման բազում Սիրաքայ լի իմաստութեամբ:*

Ełiċi jez amenecown ekełecakanaċ ew ašxarhakanaċ paštel Girk Sowrbk Hin ew Nor Ktakaranaċ՝ Movsêsi girk՝Cnndoċ, Eliċn, Łewtakan, Tiwkn, Erkrord ôrênk. Yesow Naweay, Dataworkn, Hrowtn, Tagaworowteanċn D, Mnaċordaċn gir B, Ezri bank B, Yob A, Sałmosaċ girk A, Sołomoni girk A, Esayi, Eremia, Ezekiêl, Danêl, ew artakowst patgamaworesċi ar i yowsowċanel zjer mankowns zowsman bazowm Sirakay li imastowteamb.

Let the following books be counted venerable and holy by all of you, both clergy and laity. Of the Old Testament: the five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Joshua the son of Nun; the Judges; Ruth; four of the Kings; two of Paralipomena (the books of Chronicles); two of Ezra; one of Job; one of Psalms; one of Solomon: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. *And besides these you are recommended to teach your young persons the Wisdom of the very learned Sirach.*[103]

This 'appendix' could possibly happen to appear by accident only among the Partaw canons, which will be discussed below, but the fact that it was a part of the Apostolic canons and those of the Post-Apostolic Fathers can be seen from the detailed comparison of the Old Armenian texts with the Greek originals carried out by Vazgen Hakobyan in his edition of the 'Kanonagirk' hayoc'".[104] Hakobyan's research shows that those parts of the canons translated from the Greek original texts, which were hard to adopt within the Armenian environment, over the centuries were subject to reductions. So, if the exhortation about Sirach had been irrelevant to the Armenian tradition it would have been simply excluded.

102 Ն. Պողարեան, Սիրաքի նոր գլուխներ, [N. Połarean, 'Sirak'i nor glowxner' [New Chapters of Sirach] in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1944), p. 27].

103 The original Greek text of this canon is as follows: "Ἔξωθεν δὲ ὑμῖν προσιστορείσθω μανθάνειν ὑμῶν τοὺς νέους τὴν Σοφίαν τοῦ πολυμαθοῦς Σειράχ'.

104 Վ. Հակոբյան, Կանոնագիրք հայոց [V. Hakobyan, *Kanonagirk' hayoc'*, [Book of Canons of Armenia] *Vol 1* (Yerevan, 1964), pp. 557 – 65].

Thus, the part of canon N. 85 of the Apostolic Canons is not merely a translation from Greek but indeed is officially accepted by the Armenian Church.

Turning to the exhortation in this canon addressed to both clergy and lay people about the books that they must read,[105] there are a variety of translations found in some manuscripts and there are manuscripts in which this passage is missing. It states, [Եղիցի ձեզ ամենեցուն եկեղեցականաց և աշխարհականաց պաշտել գիրք Սուրբ Հին և Նոր Կտակարանաց] 'Ełic'i jez amenec'own ekełec'akanac' ew ašxarhakanac' paštel girk' Sowrb Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'' ('Let the following books be counted venerable and sacred by all of you, both clergy and laity') and then it gives the names of the books starting from the Pentateuch and finishing with the four prophets. After listing these books the canon orders the following, [Եւ արտաքուստ պատգամաւորեսցի առ ի յուսուցանել ձեր մանունսն զուսման բազում զՍիրաքայ իմաստնոյ] 'Ew artak'owst patgamaworesc'i aṙ i yowsowc'anel jer manownsn zowsman bazowm zSirak'ay imastnoy', ('besides these you are recommended to teach your young persons the Wisdom of the very learned Sirach').[106] Evidently, the role of the Book of Sirach is considered within this canon as a unique teaching which is a part of the Scriptures. The fact that it is on the list of the books which are ordered to be read, already shows its canonicity. And the only odd nuance here is that it is not placed after Solomon's books where it should be but after the four prophets. There is no explanation why the Books of the New Testament are missing from this list. The entire canon 85 is missing from almost all known Armenian MSS. Even those MSS that have this canon have it, with some books missing from the Old Testament and omitting the whole New Testament.

Likewise, the list of books of the New Testament is missing from the canons attributed to the Post-Apostolic Fathers. Here again, the exhortation about the Book of Sirach is at the end of the Old Testament list with a slight alteration: if in the Apostolic Canons the message was addressed to both clergy and lay people, here it is addressed only to the clergy, [Եւ Եղիցի ձեզ ամենեցուն եկեղեցականացդ Սուրբ Գիրք Հին և Նոր Կտակարանաց] 'Ew Ełic'i jez amenec'own ekełec'akanac'd Sowrb Girk' Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'' ('And let the books of the Old and New Testaments be for you clergy')[107]. Listing the

105 *The Apostolic Canons: The Canons of the Holy and Altogether August Apostles No. 85,* (Latin version adds: set forth by Clement, Pontiff of the Roman Church), Translated by Henry R. Percival, 1899. [http://www.voskrese.info/spl/aposcanon.html], Revised 29.02.2012.

106 *The Apostolic Canons: The Canons of the Holy and Altogether August Apostles* No. 85. [http://www.voskrese.info/spl/aposcanon.html], Revised 29.02.2012.

107 Կանոնք Հարանց Հետևողաց [Kanonk' Haranc' Hetewołac', N. 27].

books of the Old Testament including the poetic and wisdom books the authors of the canons mention 'Sołomon G' (Solomon 3), which means the three books of Solomon: Song of Songs, the Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon. The two books of Ezra are placed straight after Wisdom, instead of Sirach. At the end of the list after the four prophets and the Maccabees the canon again states, [Կալջիք առ ի խրատել զմանկունս ձեր Սիրաք] 'Kaljik' ar i xratel zmankowns jer Sirak'' ('Take Sirach to exhort your *children*').[108] The nuance that it is addressed not to lay people but to clergy is indeed very important for discovering the significant role of Sirach in the Early Church. The phrase 'your children' when addressed to the clergy apparently means that the canon orders them to teach Sirach to those in the Church who will become priests or deacons, those who study for ordination. I infer from this that the reason why the Book of Sirach is taken out of the list and is put after it is not its insignificance but its role as an important manual for teaching those who will serve and teach future generations.

The Armenian translation of canon 55 of the Council of Laodicea (4th c.) is another interesting point relating to the canonicity of Sirach. This canon is actually a combination of canons 59 and 60 of the Greek text[109] and is not very different from the original. In this canon the Book of Sirach is not mentioned among the Old Testament Wisdom and Poetic books. However, the fact that it mentions the Book of Solomon within the canon makes us assume that not mentioning Sirach here is just a matter of unintentional omission.

If the above mentioned canons were translations from Greek or other languages the canon which was accepted at the Council of Partaw was originally written in Armenian and according to the Armenian tradition. This council was called by the Armenian Catholicos Sion and Dawit' the Catholicos of Ałvanq in Partaw the capital of Ałvank'. As in almost all the councils mentioned, the Partaw list of canons places the canon about the canonicity of the Biblical books at the end. The part about the canon of the New Testament is missing, and right at the end after the four Prophets – without noting anything about the Maccabees – the canon states, 'Եւ արտաքուստ պատգամաւորեսցի առ ի յուսուցանել ձեր մանկունս ուսումնաբազումսն Սիրաքայ իմաստնոյ' [Ew artaǩowst patgamaworesċi ar i yowsowċanel jer mankowns owsowmnabazowmsn Siraǩay imastnoy] ('besides these you are recommended to teach your young persons the Wisdom of the very learned Sirach').[110] The di-

108 Վ. Հակոբյան, Կանոնագիրք հայոց [V. Hakobyan, '*Kanonagirk' hayoc'*', p 113].
109 Վ. Հակոբյան, Կանոնագիրք հայոց [V. Hakobyan, '*Kanonagirk' hayoc'*', p 593].
110 Վ. Հակոբյան, Կանոնագիրք հայոց [V. Hakobyan, '*Kanonagirk' hayoc'*, p 18].

rective we find here repeats the last of the Apostolic Canons only with a slight difference: if in the Armenian version of the Apostolic canons it is said 'մանունս ուսման բազում', [manowns owsman bazowm] where the 'ուսման բազում' [owsman bazowm] is about Sirach and his 'great teaching' here in Partaw's canon it became 'մանկունս ուսումնաբազումս' [mankowns owsowmnabazowms] i.e. the adjective 'ուսումնաբազում' [owsowmnabazowm] ('greatly learned') describes the young person instead of Sirach. The literal coincidence of these two texts is most likely to have happened for one of the following two reasons: first, as Połarean says, it could just have been automatically attached to the list of the Partaw canons; or second, as I will suggest, it was added deliberately. If we presume that this canon was added automatically without any purpose, then it becomes difficult to answer the question of how one canon from a manuscript came to be copied into a totally different manuscript which contained canons for different settings and was accepted almost eight centuries later than the canon which was copied. Of course the second option is the more probable, i.e. the Partaw canons mostly regulate the liturgical life of the Armenian Church and the canon from the Apostolic or Clement's canons was attached to the Partaw canons to conclude the liturgical regulation of the Church. In other words, along with setting the accepted ceremonies of the Church, Catholicos Sion and all other participants of this council were determined also to set the list of accepted books of the Bible. So, it is now obvious that Połarean's assertion about this canon being automatically attached to the Partaw canon is far from being true. Since 1966 Michael E. Stone has published a series of very valuable articles in the *Harvard Theological Review* about the Canon lists of the Armenian Church, the first of which is about the list of the Partaw[111] council. The article is very informative and can be very useful for further research. Unfortunately, he does not touch at all in this article on the subject of the canonicity of Sirach in particular, but he examines some other interesting subjects, such as the differences between the Armenian and Greek texts of the Canon lists of the Apostolic canons and those of the councils of Laodicea and the Second council of Antioch.

We can see from the discussion so far that it is almost impossible to define the exact place of the Book of Sirach in the earliest canon lists of the Armenian Church. However, a clear fact about this book is that it has had a unique and important role among Armenians. A testimony to this is that the fathers of the Armenian church have considered appropriate to add some more passages

111 M. E. Stone, 'Armenian Canon lists I: The Council of Partav (768 C.E.)' in *The Harvard Theological Review Vol. 66, No. 4* (Oct., 1973), pp. 479 – 486.

into the original text of Sirach[112] and use it vastly while teaching in the schools and exhorting the faithful. The many differences which we come across in some manuscripts should not by any means make us presume that the Book of Sirach was not initially a part of the Armenian Canon and was added in later centuries. In the following sections this will become clearer when we examine the influence of Sirach on early and medieval Armenian literature.

2.3 References from the Book of Sirach in Medieval Armenian and Translated Literature

Over the course of its existence, original Armenian literature has always been accompanied by translations done from Greek, Syriac, Latin, Arabic and other languages. The significant role of these translations in the development of Armenian literature has made them an inseparable part of it. The translated commentaries and other theological writings of Sts. Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom and others have become a foundation for all Armenian theologians throughout the centuries. At the same time, because of the unique approach of the first Armenian translators to their task of translation, a new exegetical school soon emerged from this process of translation. The translations were mainly done from two languages: Greek and Syriac.[113] No doubt, among all the translations the most significant ones were those done from Greek. It was the translation of the Bible made from the Greek original texts which impressed the famous orientologist M. La Croze, who in referring to the Book of Genesis has called it 'the Queen of translations', and it was the Armenian translation of Sirach in particular which has helped some scholars to understand several verses, the meanings of which are obscure both in Syriac and Greek versions.[114]

Before passing to the examination of some important references from Sirach in Medieval Armenian literature, it might be interesting to have a glance at several details of the sources of the Armenian translation of the Bible. C. Kearns'

112 For more information on these passages read the following section in this thesis: 2.9 'Four Unique Passages which are found only in the Armenian Translation'.

113 Լ. Տեր-Պետրոսյան, Հայ հին թարգմանական գրականություն [L. Ter-Petrosyan, *Hay Hin T'argmanakan Grakanowt'yown* [Old Armenian Translated Literature] (Yerevan, 1984), pp. 23–5].

114 Cf. H. Wace, *The Holy Bible with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary and A Revision of the Translation by Clergy of the Anglican Church: Apocrypha* (London: John Murray, 1888), p. 194.

dissertation, after many years of existing on the pages of different magazines, was finally published in 2011 in one volume called '*The Expanded Text of Ecclesiasticus: Its Teaching on the Future Life As a Clue to its Origin*'. It is an extremely valuable work within the scholarship of Sirach. In this work Kearns speaks about the four general sources of the Sirach text: HI which is the Hebrew original, HII – Hebrew text with one or more recensions, GI – the Grandson's translation from Hebrew, and GII – the expanded Greek translation. Examining the textual witnesses of these sources and especially those of GII, Kearns says: 'From the point of view of the textual details even of GII the daughter versions of the LXX, viz. the Coptic, Ethiopian and Armenian are all useful'. [115] Unfortunately, Kearns does not give more information about the Armenian version of Sirach. But speaking about the Syriac translation he gives some details which can shed light on some questions related to the Armenian translation.

The first version of the Syriac Bible was translated directly from the same Hebrew text which was used by the Grandson for the Greek translation. Apparently this version was edited in the 2nd century C.E. becoming a fusion of the two sources: HI and HII. We remember that HII was a recension of HI and GI. The omission of the Grandson's Prologue is described by Kearns as a result of its non-occurrence in the Hebrew text. We must mention here that none of the Armenian texts of Sirach has this Prologue. Both the Zôhrapean and Bagratowni texts start straight from Sirach 1:1. This is a feature of the Armenian text which was influenced by its original Syriac source, and occasionally caused confusion among Armenian scholars regarding the authorship of the book. For instance, in a unique MS dated to the first quarter of the 18th c. named 'The Four Moral Books of Solomon', the Book of Sirach, alongside the Proverbs, Qohelet and the Book of Wisdom, is attributed to Solomon. One of the reasons for the erroneous attribution could have been the lack of the Prologue at the beginning of the book which clearly states the non-Solomonic authorship of Sirach.[116]

As said above, a characteristic feature of the Armenian texts is the omission of chapters 44–51. Being one of the textual witnesses of GII, the primitive Latin text did not have these chapters either. A peculiarity of the Bagratowni text is the omission of chapters 43–51 instead of 44–51. It ends at 42:25 'Ամենայն ինչ կրկին՝ մի ընդդէմ միոյ, եւ ոչ ինչ արար թերի', [Amenayn inč՝ krkin՝ mi

115 C. Kearns, *The Expanded Text of Ecclesiasticus: Its Teaching on the Future Life As a Clue to its Origin* (eds. P. C. Beentjes, G. J. Norton, M. Gilbert, N. Calduch-Benages, Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2011), p. 52.

116 JRLM Armenian MS 7, 'The Four Moral Books of Solomon', pp. 95–188b. Cf. V. N. Nersessian, *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Library: Acquired Since the Year 1913 and of Collections in Other Libraries in the United Kingdom* (London, 2012), pp. 94–99.

ənddêm mioy, ew očʻ inčʻ arar ťeri] (All things come to pairs, one opposite the other, and he has made nothing incomplete).[117] Verse 25 of the LXX is missing from the Armenian text.

The earliest use of Sirach in patristic literature is seen in the Didache: 'Become not one who for taking stretches out his hands, but for giving clenches them tight',[118] this is a clear reference to Sir. 4:31. D. J. Harrington makes reference to Barnabas 19.9 which also quotes the same verse of Sirach.[119] Many later non-Armenian authors, e. g. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem and Latin writers Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome and Augustine have quoted from Sirach but only very few of them attributed the phrases they used to Sirach by explicitly mentioning his name. In fact, this is true for almost all the references from Sirach in Armenian literature as well.

A fair amount of MSS has been engaged in examination of the verses of Sirach quoted by various Church fathers. During the past twenty years hundreds of extremely valuable MSS, which contain originally Armenian and translated literature, were copied and published by the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia under a general title [Մատենագիրք Հայոց] *'Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ'* (Armenian Authors).[120] In many instances the volumes of this publication were referred to in this thesis. In addition, several single MSS, such as MM. N. 345, pp. 475v-486r; MM. N. 181 pp. 1r -1v; MM. N. 352 pp. 191r-196r; VeM, N. 9 pp. 385v-393r; ViM, Library Collection, N. 71 pp. 334r-341r; British Library, London N. 14101 pp. 344r-351r; MM. N. 1500 pp. 363r-369v; Jer.SJ N. 1656 pp. 101r-167v; 242r VeM N. 23 pp. 194r-249v etc., were used to compare the patristic literature and the original Armenian texts of Sirach.

Now let us have a look at various references from Sirach occurring in medieval Armenian original and translated literature. Of course, the genre of biblical commentary did not originate in Armenia. Armenian exegetes were heirs to a large patristic corpus of writing.[121] Robert Thomson, examining the whole proc-

117 Verse 42:24 in LXX and NRSV.

118 Դիդախե, Ներածական, Տասներկու առաքեալների վարդապետութիւնը [Didache 4:5. Cf. 'Neracakan, Tasnerkow aŕakʻealneri vardapetowtʻiwnə' [An Introduction: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles] in *Ganjasar No. 7* (trns. S. Grkašarean, ed. M. Aǰapahean, Yerevan, 2002), pp. 135 – 60].

119 D. J. Harrington, 'The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Early Church and Today' in *The Canon Debate* (eds. M. McDonald, E. J. Sanders, USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), pp. 196 – 210.

120 Մատենագիրք Հայոց *Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ* [Armenian Authors] (Antelias, 2003).

121 R. W. Thomson, 'Homilies and Biblical Commentary in Classical Armenian Writers' in *Worship Traditions in Armenia and the Neighboring Christian East* (ed. R. Ervine, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), p. 178.

ess of translations into Armenian says: 'They [Armenians] did not necessarily imitate the format of the famous writings by, say, John Chrysostom, Basil or Gregory Nazianzus, but Armenians were aware of themes from these and other writers which could be put to use and developed in an Armenian context'.[122] Having this in mind, it is not surprising to find that the first references from Sirach are found not in works composed originally in Armenian but in translations, especially in translations of the works of St. John Chrysostom. As Garegin Zarbhanalean writes, 'When our translators got to Byzantium, they found the city overwhelmed by the fame of the wise writings of him [Chrysostom]. Therefore, they embarked immediately on the translation of those works. All these highly valuable works have been translated by Eznik and his fellow students.'[123]

Since Sirach is a part of the moral and ethical books of the OT similar to the Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon, the exegetical approach to it has almost always been rather literal, as to a book of teaching, and not allegorical. Because of that the great representative of the literal textual exegetical school of Antioch, St. John Chrysostom, uses Sirach extensively in his moral exhortations. In the anthology of his homilies Chrysostom refers to Sirach eleven times. If we take into consideration that most of the homilies by Chrysostom were translated into Armenian between the $5^{th}-8^{th}$ centuries then we discover that actually the most ancient references from the Book of Sirach in the Armenian language are found in St. John Chrysostom's homilies.

Some scholars might argue that the church fathers who translated those homilies could have done so straight from the Greek texts, without referring to a separate Armenian translation when quoting verses of Sirach. However, the almost identical verses of Sirach found in later manuscripts indicate that Sirach was translated not later than the 5th c. The mere existence of those references in the $5^{th}-8^{th}$ c. Armenian literature in the form of short sentences or individual phrases is still very important as this shows the significant role of Sirach in these centuries. In his sermon given on the occasion of his first Liturgy after ordination, Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of the word. He even compares different kinds of offerings with the offering of the word and, showing the superiority of the word, says: 'I promised myself, opening my mouth for the first time in church, to devote to God the first fruits of my word'.[124] To show the importance of

122 R. W. Thomson, *'Homilies and Biblical Commentary in Classical Armenian Writers'*, p. 178.
123 Գ. Զարբհանալեան, Մատենադարան հայկական թարգմանութեանց նախնեաց [G. Zarbhanalean, *Matenadaran haykakan ŧargmanowŧeanc naxneac'* [Library of the Armenian Translations of the Ancestors] (Venice, Mechitarist Press, 1889), p. 582].
124 John Chrysostom, *First Sermon* [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_first_sermon.htm], Revised 07.03.2012.

the word he refers to the prophet Hosea (14:2) and says, 'Take words with you and return to the Lord'. Then he says that he would like to offer the same sacrifice and asks a rhetorical question, 'How can I offer?'. After this question he says, 'Իմաստուն ումն այր ապ ի բերան արարեալ զիս, եւ զարհուրեցուցանէ յասել ընդ իւրում' [Imastown omn ayr aṗ i beran arareal zis, ew zarhowreċowċanê yasel ənd iwrowm] (a wise man closes my mouth and terrifies me with these words...) and goes on to quote the words of Sirach:[125]

Chrysostom	Bagratowni
Ոչ է գեղեցիկ աւրհնութիւն ի բերան մեղաւորի: [Oč' ê gełeċik awrhnowtiwn i beran meławori]	Ոչ է գեղեցիկ աւրհնութիւն ի բերան մեղաւորի: [Oč' ê gełeċik awrhnowtiwn i beran meławori]
Chrysostom Greek	**English NRSV**
Οὐχ ὡραῖος αἶνος ἐν στόματι ἁμαρτωλοῦ.	Praise loses its beauty on the lips of a sinner.

Crucially, these words from Sirach which we find in the earliest manuscripts of the homily of Chrysostom are identical to the same verse in Bagratowni's edition of Sirach. An interesting detail is that, following this homily of St. John Chrysostom, some other Armenian authors since the 5th century have referred to Sirach as 'mi imastown' or 'omn imastown' which is translated as 'a wise man'. Chrysostom here says that the words of Sirach terrified him and he draws the following parallel: 'Although a garland may be priceless, it is not enough that the flowers are pure. Pure also must be the hand that has woven it'.[126] This parallel is apparently based on a tradition which goes back to antiquity. The same meaning has another parallel which St. John introduces straight after the previous one, 'Although an anthem may be worthy of God, the devotion of the words must be united to the piety of the soul who offers them'.[127] Chrysostom comments on the words of Sirach emphasizing the importance of the purity not only of one's deeds but also the soul in general.

In another homily called 'On the Holy Martyrs', Chrysostom says that because of His graciousness towards human beings, God has not appointed the heavenly angels to be their overseers but instead He appointed priests who have the same nature as other human beings. Being immaterial creatures, angels

125 Sir. 15:9.

126 John Chrysostom, *First Sermon* [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_first_sermon.htm], Revised 07.03.2012.

127 John Chrysostom, *First Sermon* [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_first_sermon.htm], Revised 07.03.2012.

would not understand and tolerate the weaknesses and sins of human beings and consequently they would punish sinners strictly. And knowing this, almighty God appointed priests who, being from the same flesh as others, instead of just punishing would exhort and put them on the right path. Were an angel to have been appointed to judge human beings, they would say that the angels have not been tempted and therefore the sufferings that happen to human beings are unknown to them.[128] However, a priest can say to others, 'I have had the same sufferings and because of it I know the influence of sins'. And right after this, Chrysostom again refers to Sirach with the words so characteristic to Sirach, saying, 'Քանզի ամէնեքեան ընդ կշտամբանօք եմք'[129] ([Remember] that we all deserve punishment). This last sentence of Sirach is found neither in Bagratowni's edition nor in the Modern translation of the Bible. In Zôhrapean's edition it appears as follows: 'Որ դարձեալ իցէ ի մեղաց, մի զնա նախատեր, **զի եւ մեք ընդ մեղաց պահու եմք', [Or darjeal iċê i mełaċ, mi zna naxater, zi ew meḳ ənd mełaċ pahow emk] (Do not reproach one who is turning away from sin; remember that we all stand before sins [we all sin]).**

Although Chrysostom uses only the second part of this verse he refers to the first half frequently in his sermon without making a direct quotation. He uses this reference to Sirach to underpin his opinion that a sinner must not be punished cruelly but exhorted mildly instead. Sirach's words become then a platform for St. John to develop his idea of teaching sinners. Connecting Sirach's idea with a similar concept from Proverbs 20:9, Chrysostom says, 'Ո՞ պարծեսցի սիրտ սուրբ ունել',[130] [O՞ parceṡi sirt sowrb ownel] (Who can boast, 'I have made my heart clean'?).

It is also necessary to mention that almost all the references from Sirach that we find in the works of Chrysostom are either preceded or succeeded by references from the Wisdom of Solomon, Proverbs, the Psalms, the Song of Songs and Qohelet, completing in that way Sirach's thoughts in poetic and wisdom literature context. This is a tradition started by St. John Chrysostom which then penetrated into Armenian ecclesiastical literature.

In one of his homilies called 'On the Statues', St. John writes that God created the universe not only wonderful but also with imperfections and He himself gives many examples of the imperfections of the World. Chrysostom first counts the examples of God's great wonders which show the beauty of the creation,

128 Յովհան Ոսկեբերան, Հատընտիր գիրք և ճառք և ներբողք [Yovhan Oskeberan, *Hatəntir girḳ, ew čarḳ ew nerboł̇ḳ* [Selected writings, homilies and odes] (Venice, 1818), p. 88].
129 Sir. 8:5.
130 Յովհան Ոսկեբերան, Հատընտիր գիրք և ճառք և ներբողք [Yovhan Oskeberan, *'Hatəntir girḳ, ew čarḳ ew nerboł̇ḳ'*, p. 88].

‘Երկինք պատմեն զփառս Աստուծոյ’,[131] [Erkinǩ patmen zṗaṙs Astowcoy] (The heavens are telling the glory of God). Then immediately, instead of Sirach, he produces a reference from Isaiah (40:22) ‘It is he… who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to live in’. And again, to give a complete understanding of the idea of what he explains, he includes a part of the verse from Sirach 43:12, ‘Որ ունի զծիր երկնից’ [Or owni zcir erknič] (It encircles the arch of the sky). This last verse is missing from both Bagratowni’s and Modern Armenian editions. It is found only in Zôhrapean’s text with alteration, ‘Ձեռք բարձրելոյն հաստատեաց զխորանս երկնից’ [Jeṙǩ barjreloyn hastateaċ zxorans erknič] (The hand of the Most High established the arch of the sky). Comparatively closer to Zôhrapean’s edition is the translation found in the newly discovered chapters of Sirach, ‘Բոլորեաց զերկիր բոլորիւ փառաց: Ձեռք Բարձրելոյն տարածեցին զնա’[132] [Boloreaċ zerkir boloriw ṗařaċ: Jeṙǩ Barjreloyn taraceċin zna] (He weaved the Earth with [his] whole glory. The hand of the Most High extended it [the sky]).

Reckoning the many examples of the beauty and splendour of the universe, St. John addresses his speech to the people, ‘Did you see the beauty of the stars and the greatness of the Creation?’ He then starts to talk about the bad and unholy sides of the World, bringing in once again a very descriptive thought from Sirach; ‘For this has been shown by a wise man, ‘Ջի՞նչ լուսաւորագոյն քան զարեգակն, սակայն եւ նա նուազի’,[133] [Zi՞nč‘ lowsaworagoyn ǩan zaregakn, sakayn ew na nowazi] (What is brighter than the sun? Yet it can be eclipsed). This reference is very similar to Sir. 17:31 of Bagratowni’s Bible. The only difference is in the verb ‘պակասէ’[134] [pakasê] (diminishes) which is used instead of ‘նուազի’ [nowazi] which has an identical meaning. This is the earliest example of a verse of Sirach being cited in a form identical to the form in Zôhrapean’s edition. As we know Zôhrapean’s edition is the most reliable edition known so far in the Armenian language. Some of the manuscripts that he used were copied from the original 5th century translations and in this regard it was important

131 Ps. 19:1.

132 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, ‘Noragiwt glowxner Siraǩay grǩin hin t‘argmanowt‘enên’ in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50]. See also Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, ‘Sirak‘i grk‘i hnagowyn t‘argmanowt‘yan norahayt hatvacner’ in *Etchmiadzin No. 11–12*, (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60–70].

133 Sir. 17:31.

134 Both ‘նուազի’ [nowazi] and ‘պակասէ’ [pakasê] can be translated into English as ‘decrease’ or ‘lessen’. The NRSV translation is ‘eclipsed’ which is translated from the Greek LXX ‘ἐκλείπει’.

to find an identical verse in the 5th century translation of St. John Chrysostom's homily to any of the known Armenian versions of the Bible. Indeed, the example that St. John brings from Sirach is used as a tool to depict the two contrasting realities of the world: both the understanding of imperfection and the movement towards perfection.

In the 15th homily of the same series, Chrysostom touches upon the subject of fear as a way of strengthening one's faith and says, 'Fear is nothing less than a wall, and a defence, and an impregnable tower. For indeed we stand in need of much defence, seeing that there are many ambushes on every side'.[135] Here Chrysostom again includes a testimony from Sirach 9:13. Unlike other references though, here Chrysostom mistakenly attributes these words to Solomon, 'Ըստ որում Սողոմոն խրատելով ասէր', [Əst orowm Sołomon xratelov asêr] (Meanwhile Solomon said admonishing). Interestingly, it is characteristic also for some other authors of the middle ages to confuse the name of Sirach with Solomon, mainly because the works of both of them belong to the same genre. For instance, Yovhan Mandakowni (5th c.) again erroneously attributes the following words in his 'Homilies'[136] to Solomon instead of Sirach: 'Զսիրտ տառապելոյ մի՛ զայրացուցաներ. մի՛յապաղեր զտուրս կարօտելոյն'.[137] [Zsirt tar̄apeloy mi´ zayraċowċaner. mi´yapałer ztowrs karôteloyn] It is clear, though, that these words are taken from Sirach 4:3 (Do not add to the troubles of the desperate or delay giving to the needy). Deriving from the fact that Sirach has many common features with Solomon's writings, it has almost always been placed after them in the Armenian canon lists. The chapter that these words are taken from is almost all about those sins that a person can commit, and the verse that Chrysostom takes from it is the climax of this chapter, 'Ծանիր' զի ընդ մէջ որոգայթից անցանես եւ ի վերայ մահարձանաց քաղաքաց շրջիս',[138] [Canir' zi ənd mêǰ orogayṫiċ anċanes ew i veray maharjanaċ ḱałaḱaċ šrǰis] (Know that you are stepping among snares, and that you are walking on the city battlements). The whole verse is missing from Zôhrapean's text but is present in Bagratowni's edition under verse 20 instead of 13 as it is in the LXX or NRSV, **'Գիտասջիր զի ընդ մէջ որոգայթից անցանիցես, եւ ի վերայ մահարձանաց քաղաքի շրջիցես' [Gitasǰir zi ənd**

135 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Siraḱay grḱin hin ṫargmanowṫenên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50].
136 Յովհան Մանդակունի, Ճառեր [Yovhan Mandakowni, *Č̆ar̄er* [Homilies] (Antelias, 2001), p. 79].
137 Sir. 4:3.
138 Sir. 9:13.

mêǰ orogayẗiċ anċaniċes, ew i veray maharjanaċ ǩałaǩi šrǰiċes] (Know that you are stepping among snares, and that you are walking on the city battlements). Interesting is the use of the word 'մահարձան', [maharjan] the literal translation of which from Classical Armenian is 'tombstone' but which in Modern Armenian is translated similar to Greek[139] 'պարիսպ' [parisp] (battlement). Expressing his admiration for these words of Sirach which describe the snares of one's life, Chrysostom says: 'Քանի՛ բարեօք լի է բանս'[140], [Ǩaní bareôǩ li ê bans] (Oh, with how many words these words are pregnant). He explicitly emphasizes the importance of Sirach's word 'Ծանիր', [Canir] (Perceive!) the snare and not just observe because 'destruction does not appear openly, and the injury is not manifest'.

In the Book of Genesis we read that God created Adam and said: 'I will make him a helper as his partner'.[141] Chrysostom in another Homily called 'On Virginity' asks a question, how can one be a helper if she was a reason for the exile from Paradise? The reference from Sirach that he uses here can be found in all the texts: Zôhrapean, Bagratowni and the Modern Armenian Bible.

Chrysostom	Zôhrapean
Ի կնոջէ սկիզբն մեղաց եւ վասն նորա մեռանիմք ամենեքին: [I knoǰê skizbn mełaċ ew vasn nora meřanimǩ amenekin]	Ի կնոջէ սկիզբն մեղաց եւ վասն նորա մեռանիմք ամենեքեան: [I knoǰê skizbn mełaċ ew vasn nora meřanimǩ amenekean]
Chrysostom Greek	**English NRSV**
Ἀπὸ γὰρ γυναικὸς, φησὶν, ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας, καί δι αὐτήν ἀποθνήσκομεν πάντες.	From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die.

This verse is numbered 25:33 in both Classical Armenian editions and 24:31 in the Modern Armenian translation. The only difference which we find between Chrysostom's work and the two Grabar editions is in the word 'ամենեքին' or 'ամենեքեան' which had the same meaning (all) in Grabar but a different spelling. It is in verse 25:24 both in Greek[142] and NRSV.

Chrysostom allocates an entire topic in his homily on the Priesthood to the question of prostitution among young people and widows. He allows priests to condemn the people who go astray from the right path.

139 Ἐπάλξεων.

140 Yovhan Oskeberan, *'Hatəntir girǩ, ew čařǩ ew nerbołǩ'* p. 218.

141 Gen. 2:18.

142 Sir. 25:24, ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας, καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ἀποθνήσκομεν πάντες.

> Քանզի թեպէտ եւ ստիպին նօքա կարի իմն անամօթանալ ի պատճառ կարեաց որովայնին, այլ սակայն եւ ցաւին ընդ բռնութիւն ընդ այն: Քանզի յորժամ առ ահիւ սովուն բռնադատին մուրանալ, իսկ ի մուրանալն՝ լրբի, իսկ յաղագս լրբութեան թշնամանս կրել, բազմադէմ իմն բռնութիւն ցաւոց՝ աղջամղջին ծնող խաւարի՝ տիրէ զհոգիս նոցա.[143]
>
> Ǩanzi ťepêt ew stipin nôǩa kari imn anamôťanal i patčař kareaċ orovaynin, ayl sakayn ew ċawin ənd bŕnowťiwn ənd ayn: Ǩanzi yoržam ař ahiw sovown bŕnadatin mowranal, isk i mowranaln՝ lrbi, isk yałags lrbowťean ťšnamans krel, bazmadêm imn bŕnowťiwn ċawoċ՝ ałǰamłǰin cnoł xawari՝ tirê zhogis noċa
>
> For even if they have to put themselves to shame because of the needs of their stomach at the same time they struggle because of the abuse. For every time when they beg because of the fear of hunger, they go astray and because of prostitution they experience enmety. Then after the pain caused by violence darkness rules over their souls).

At the same time Chrysostom says that instead of solely punishing, priests must try to combat the factors which cause these sins to be committed. In this homily he discusses the social problems which give birth to immorality in general. To underpin the idea of protecting the poor instead of blaming the widows, Chrysostom again comes up with Sirach 4:8 and says:

Chrysostom	Zôhrapean
Խոնարհեցո աղքատի զունկն քո առանց տրտմութեան եւ խօսեաց առաջի նորա հեզութեամբ ի խաղաղութիւն: [Xonarheċo ałǩati zownkn ǩo ařanċ trtmowťean ew xôseaċ ařaǰi nora hezowťeamb i xałałowťiwn]	Առաջի իշխանի խոնարհեցո զունկն քո եւ խօսեաց առաջի նորա հեզութեամբ: [Ařaǰi išxani xonarheċo zownkn ǩo ew xôseaċ ařaǰi nora hezowťeamb]
Bagratowni	**English NRSV**
Խոնարհեցո տնանկի զունկն քո, եւ տուր նմա պատասխանի խաղաղական հեզութեամբ: [Xonarheċo tnanki zownkn ǩo, ew towr nma patasxani xałałakan hezowťeamb]	Give a hearing to the poor, and return their greeting politely.

In terms of lingua-stylistic similarity the Bagratowni version is the closest to the translation of Chrysostom's text. Then comes the Modern Armenian translation. However, in terms of pure textual literal order the Zôhrapean version is the one which matches it most closely. A very peculiar word which only occurs in the Zôhrapean Bible dramatically changes its entire meaning suggesting the oppo-

143 Յովհան Ոսկեբերան, Հատընտիր գիրք և ճառք և ներբողք [Yovhan Oskeberan, '*Hatəntir girǩ, ew čařǩ ew nerbołǩ*', p. 259].

site of what Sirach actually says, i.e. instead of saying 'Give a hearing to the poor', 'աղքատի', [ałkati] it says 'Give a hearing to a prince', 'իշխանի' [išxani].

Following this, Chrysostom points out that the word said with softness and meekness can impress and help more than the word said as an obligation. Then he says that it is not only he who thinks this way but also *the one* who has exhorted previously. Here St. John alludes to Sirach and the following reference from Sirach's book confirms this. The Classical Armenian text of Chrysostom's work here as well gives a slightly different translation.

Chrysostom	Bagratowni
Որդեա՛կ բարեաց բամբասանս մի՛ տար եւ մի յամենայն տուրս տրտմութեան բանից: Զտապ տօթոյ զուարթացուցանէ ցօղ, այսպէս լաւ բան ուրախ առնէ քան զտուրս, զի աւանիկ բարի է բան քան զտուրս. Եւ երկոքին իսկ են առ քաղցրահամբոյր մարդոյ:[144] [Ordea՛k bareaċ bambasans mi՛ tar ew mi yamenayn towrs trtmowtean baniċ: Ztap tôtoy zowaṙtaċowċanê ċôł, ayspês law ban owrax aṙnê ƙan ztowrs, zi awanik bari ê ban ƙan ztowrs. Ew erkoƙin isk en aṙ ƙałċrahamboyr mardoy]	Որդեա՛կ, ի բարիս քո արատ մի՛ մուծաներ, եւ մի՛ յամենայն տուրս բան տրտմութեան: Ո՞չ ապաքէն զտօթ զովացուցանէ ցօղ, սոյնպէս լաւ բան՝ քան զտուրս. Եւ երկոքին ընդ առն շնորհավորի:[145] [Ordea՛k, i baris ƙo arat mi՛ mowcaner, ew mi՛ yamenayn towrs ban trtmowtean: O՞ċ՝ apaƙên ztôł zovaċowċanê ċôł, soynpês law ban՝ ƙan ztowrs. Ew erkoƙin ənd aṙn šnorhavori]

English NRSV

My child, do not mix reproach with your good deeds, or spoil your gift by harsh words. Does not the dew give relief from the scorching heat? So a word is better than a gift.
Indeed, does not a word surpass a good gift? Both are to be found in a gracious person.

In terms of translation there are more similarities between the Bagratowni version and the Modern translation than between the Bagratowni and the translation of Chrysostom. On the other hand there is a noticeable resemblance between the last two: both of them emphasize the importance of not mixing reproach with good deeds.

After speaking about widows, St. John again addresses his word to priests, now speaking about the virgins and underlining three reasons why these are

144 Յովհան Ոսկեբերան, Հատընտիր գիրք և ճառք և ներբողք [Yovhan Oskeberan, *'Hatəntir girƙ, ew čarƙ ew nerbołƙ'*, p. 260].

145 Sir. 18:15 – 17 in Գիրք Աստուածաշունչ Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց [*Girƙ' Astowacašownč' Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'* (ed. A. Bagratowni, Venice, 1860)].

in danger: first, the enemy of holiness is always hiding and lying in wait for the virgins; secondly other people lay snares for them; and finally, their own nature and passionate character put them in danger. Thus they must equip themselves for a twofold war, one which attacks them from without, and the other which presses upon them from within.[146] Counting all the inside and outside dangers, Chrysostom quotes Sirach 42:9.

Chrysostom	Zôhrapean
Դուստր հօր ի ծածուկ տքնութիւն է, եւ հոգ նորա մերժէ զքուն:[147] [Dowstr hôr i cacowk tḱnowt̓iwn ê, ew hog nora meržê zḱown]	Դուստր Հօր ի ծածուկ տքնութիւն է: [Dowstr Hôr i cacowk tḱnowt̓iwn ê]
Bagratowni	**English NRSV**
Դուստր հօր գաղտնի տքնութիւն է, եւ հօգք նորա հեռի առնէ զքուն: [Dowstr hôr gałtni tḱnowt̓iwn ê, ew hôgḱ nora heṙi aṙnê zḱown]	A daughter is a secret anxiety to her father, and worry over her robs him of sleep.

The syntax of Chrysostom's text is closer to Bagratowni as the verse in Zôhrapean appears in an abbreviated version. By contrast, the latter has more words which match with Chrysostom's text than the Bagratowni.

Chrysostom then once more emphasizes the significant impact of the power of priesthood. He says that with his own example a priest can raise the faithful but he can also become a stumbling block for them.[148] Putting his life in danger and even being killed for the sake of his faith and his sheep, a priest can be a source of inspiration even after his death. But another faint-hearted priest who is afraid of everything in his life can truly be a stumbling block for everyone. For confirmation of his opinion, St. John refers implicitly to Sirach, not mentioning Sirach's name, says: 'Յաղագս որոյ եւ իմաստուն ոմն խրատէ ասելով',[149] [Yałags oroy ew imastown omn xratê aselov](About which a wise man exhorts, saying...). Here Sirach again is called 'a wise man'. Then he choo-

146 John Chrysotom, *On the Priesthood, Book III* [http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/19223.htm], Revised 19.03.2012.

147 Յովհան Ոսկեբերան, Հատընտիր գիրք և ճառք և ներբողք [Yovhan Oskeberan, '*Hatəntir girḱ, ew čaṙḱ ew nerbołḱ*', p. 261].

148 Յովհան Ոսկեբերան, Հատընտիր գիրք և ճառք և ներբողք [Yovhan Oskeberan, '*Hatəntir girḱ, ew čaṙḱ ew nerbołḱ*', p. 275].

149 Յովհան Ոսկեբերան, Հատընտիր գիրք և ճառք և ներբողք [Yovhan Oskeberan, '*Hatəntir girḱ, ew čaṙḱ ew nerbołḱ*', p. 360].

ses as a principle for the self-sacrificial life of the priests the following verse of Sirach: 'Մի՛ ակն առնուր անձին քումմ',[150] (Do not show partiality to your own harm),[151] the translation of which matches with the same verse in the Bagratowni version: 'Մի՛ առնուր ակն անձին քո'. [Mi՛ aṙnowr akn anjin ǩo] The same can be said about the Modern translation which is 'Մի՛ եղիր աչառու հակառակ քո անձի'.[152] [Mi՛ eł̇ir ač̣aṙow hakaṙak ǩo anji].

As we have seen, for the first time in biblical scholarship, I have attempted to compare the different texts of Sirach found in the Classical Armenian Bagratowni, Zôhrapean and Modern Armenian versions of the Bible with the same verses which the translators of the homilies by St. John Chrysostom used in their translations. It can now be concluded that in many instances those translators did not translate the verses of Sirach used in St. John's homilies from Greek into Armenian but instead used an already existing Armenian text of Sirach. It is indeed hardly possible to state for certain whether it was Yôvhannês Zôhrapean who used the same texts as the 5th century translators or rather Arsên Bagratowni, as both of their texts contain verses which closely resemble Chrysostom's Armenian translations. However, the obvious similarities between these two editions and the texts of Chrysostom may lead us to the conclusion that there was already a translated text of Sirach in the 5th century and that it was part of the canon of the Armenian Bible.

The 5th century Armenian Catholicos and scholar St. Yovhan Mandakowni is famous among church scholars because his book of homilies is the first in its genre originally written in Armenian. One interesting passage from the 10th Homily 'Յաղագս բամբասողաց եւ չդատելոյ զվարդապետսն', [Yałags bambasołać ew č̣'dateloy zvardapetsn] (On Gossipers and on not judging the Vardapets) of his book also supports the hypothesis that there was an Armenian text of Sirach in the 5th century. Here St. Yovhan addressing his speech to lay people says that the honour of the Vardapets (archimandrite) must not be offended. To strengthen his message, Mandakowni draws on some examples from the Bible which are about due respect and honour towards clergy. He adds then that whoever shows respect to the priests does it not primarily to them but first of all to God because it is God who bestows the rank of priesthood, 'Զի ամենայն որ պատուէ զքահանայսն, զԱստուած փառաւորէ եւ պատուէ, եւ որ արհամարհէ զԱստուած արհամարհէ'.[153] [Zi amenayn or patowê zǩahanaysn, zAstowac ṗaṙaworê ew patowê, ew or arhamarhê zAstowac arhamarhê]

150 Sir. 4:26.

151 Sir. 4:22 in NRSV.

152 Sir. 4:25 in the Modern Armenian translation.

153 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirk' Hayoc', Vol. 1* (Antelias, 2003), p. 1204].

As a proof of his words Mandakowni combines Sirach 7:31 with Exodus 22:28 saying: **‘Զքահանայսն ք մեծարեսջիր, եւ զիշխանս ժողովրդեան ք մի արհամարհիցես’[154] [Zk̆ahanaysn k̆o mecaresǰir, ew zišxans žołovrdean k̆o mi arhamarhiċes] (Honour your priests and do not neglect the leaders of your people[155]). In terms of meaning the first part of this sentence, which is taken from Sirach 7:31, matches with both Zôhrapean and Bagratowni editions but grammatically it has a slight difference. In the Bagratowni version the verse is as follows: ‘Զքահանայսն նորա մեծարեա’ [Zk̆ahanaysn nora mecarea]. Almost the same text can be found in the Zôhrapean version, ‘Մեծարեա զքահանայս նորա’ [Mecarea zk̆ahanays nora]. The only grammatical difference between these two versions and that of the Mandakowni Homilies is in the word ‘նորա’ [nora] (his or of him) which in Mandakowni is found as ‘ք’ [k̆o] (your). However, the difference we encounter here is not textual, i.e. the use of the word ‘ք’ by Mandakowni does not imply that it existed in the original manuscript which was used by him. Mandakowni changes the word ‘նորա’ to ‘ք’ simply because he addresses his homily to the faithful and tries to show that the priesthood is not a detached institution but is part of the society. It is interesting that neither the Greek nor the English NRSV versions of Sirach use ‘his’ or ‘your’. In Greek it is just ‘δόξασον ἱερέα’ which does not specify whether priests are ‘of God’ or ‘of people’. So the fact that Mandakowni uses the word ‘ք’ again justifies our assumption that he used an already existing Armenian text of this book. It is also worth mentioning that the second part of this sentence is also paraphrased by Mandakowni, which shows he has approached the original text with artistic license.**

The book called *‘Girk‘ pitoyic‘’* [Գիրք պիտոյից] (Book of Necessities) by Movsês K‘ertoł[156] which is dated to around 5th-7th centuries and to which I have already referred in discussing the canonicity of Sirach, not only contains references from Sirach but it also calls Sirach for the first time in the Armenian literature ‘The Most Wise’, (Ամէնիմաստուն).[157] [Amênimastown] Apparently this characterization of Sirach was common at the time when the *Girk‘ pitoyic‘* was written, as Xorenac‘i thinks that Sirach was the wisest among all the authors of wisdom literature. In a passage speaking about friendship Xorenac‘i says, ‘Ըստ նմին օրինակի եւ ումն ամէնիմաստուն արտաբերեաց բանիւ,

154 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirk‘ Hayoc‘, Vol. 1* (Antelias, 2003), p. 1204].

155 NRSV uses ‘curse’ instead of ‘neglect’, Greek uses ‘κακῶς ἐρεῖς’ (to say bad things).

156 Movsês K‘ertoł Xorenac‘i [Մովսէս Խորենացի] is the most famous Armenian historian of the 5th century and is known as ‘The Father of Armenian historiography’.

157 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirk‘ Hayoc‘, Vol. 7* (Antelias, 2007), p. 752].

զհաւատարիմ բարեկամս ղեղ ասելով կենաց',[158] [Əst nmin ôrinaki ew omn amênimastown artabereaċ baniw, zhawatarim barekams deł aselov kenaċ] (In the same way the most wise man said that loyal friends are medicine of life). Here Xorenac'i refers to Sirach 6:16, 'Faithful friends are life-saving medicine'. In Zôhrapean's edition this verse is slightly altered, 'Հաւատարիմ բարեկամի չիք գինք' [Hawatarim barekami čʻiǩ ginǩ] (The loyal friend is priceless). However, Arsên Bagratowni preserved the same form which is found in the *Girkʻ pitoyicʻ*.

In the 9th volume of the *'Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ'* [Մատենագիրք Հայոց] Hakob Kʻyoseyan speaks about a homily by Grigor the Archdeacon which is called 'Խաւսք ի Սուրբ Գրիգոր Լուսաւորիչ ասացեալ ի Սուրբ քաղաքն Երուսաղեմ' [Xawsǩ i Sowrb Grigor Lowsavorič asaċeal i Sowrb ǩałaǩn Erowsałem] (A message to St. Gregory the Illuminator addressed in the Holy city of Jerusalem) and dated to the 6th – 7th centuries. Kʻyoseyan asserts that the author of this homily is aiming to refute the Paulitians and Docetists who believed that the only condition for human salvation is faith and no matter whether a person is a sinner or not, he will not be punished in eternity.[159] The reason why this homily is dated to the 6th or 7th centuries is because it was the time when the Paulitians and Docetic heresies were widespread in Armenia.[160] In the homily, the Archdeacon says that the lawlessly wicked people must know that 'the stolen possession is not pleasing for God'.[161] And more, God not only does not accept it but he even becomes angry with it. After quoting the words of Isaiah 66:3 he says referring to Sirach, 'Likewise the other Prophet says, 'Եթէ ոք ի զրկանաց տառապելոց մատուցանիցէ Աստուծոյ պատարագ, այնպէս է համարեալ, որպէս զորդի առաջի հաւր իւրոյ զենուցու'', [Eťê oǩ i zrkanaċ taŕapeloċ matowċaniċê Astowcoy patarag, aynpês ê hamareal, orpês zordi aŕaǰi hawr iwroy zenowċow] (If someone offers a sacrifice to God what was taken from the poor, it is like sacrificing the son to his father).[162]

It is indeed interesting that Sirach is being described by Grigor the Archdeacon as a prophet. I think two possible reasons might shed light on the issue why Grigor gives such a title to Sirach. First, because right before Sirach, the author

158 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ, Vol. 7* (Antelias, 2007), p. 752].
159 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ, Vol. 9* (Antelias, 2008), p. 1056].
160 Հ. Բ. Սարգիսեան, Գրիգոր Սարկաւագապետ, գրիչ Զ դարու և Խորենացու հետ ունեցած անոր աղերսը [H. B. Sargisian, 'Grigor Sarkawagapet, grič Z darow ew Xorenacʻuw het ownecʻac anor ałersə' in *Bazmavêp* (Venice , 1904), p. 126].
161 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ, Vol. 9 (Antelias, 2008), p. 1065].
162 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ, Vol. 9 (Antelias, 2008), p. 1065].

makes mention of Isaiah, and to make it easy to explain he just says 'the other prophet'. That is one option. The second more probable hypothesis is that the 'Prophecy of Sirach' was so highly respected that the author is simply called 'Prophet'. The fact that the reference from Sirach was preceded by another reference from Isaiah is not a likely reason for Sirach to be called prophet. The verses from Sirach that are presented as a prophecy are edited by the author.[163]

Grigor Archdeacon	Zôhrapean
Եթէ ոք ի զրկանաց տառապելոց մատուցանիցէ Աստուծոյ պատարագ՝ այնպէս զորդի առաջի հաւր իւրոյ զենուցու: Etê ok i zrkanaċ taŕapeloċ matowċaniċê Astowcoy patarag՝ aynpês zordi aŕaǰi hawr iwroy zenowċow	Ոչ հաճի Բարձրեալն ընդ պատարագս ամբարշտաց, եւ ոչ բազմութեամբ պատարագաց քավէ զմեղս: **Զենու զորդի առաջի հօր իւրոյ՝ որ մատուցանէ պատարագ յընչից օտարաց: Հաց կարօտելոց կեանք աղքատաց...** **Oč՝ hači Barjrealn ənd patarags ambarštaċ, ew oč՝ bazmowťeamb pataragaċ ƙavê zmeťs: Zenow zordi aŕaǰi hôr iwroy՝ or matowċanê patarag yənč՝iċ ôtaraċ: Haċ karôteloċ keanƙ aťƙataċ...**

English NRSV

The Most High is not pleased with the offerings of the ungodly, nor for a multitude of sacrifices does he forgive sins.
Like one who kills a son before his father's eyes is the person who offers a sacrifice from the property of the poor.
The bread of the needy is the life of the poor...

The edited version from the Archdeacon's book matches with the highlighted part of Sirach 31:24.[164] As we see, he has also changed the word 'յընչից օտարաց' [yənč՝iċ ôtaraċ] (from the property of others) as it appears in the Zôhrapean Bible, to 'ի զրկանաց տառապելոց', [i zrkanaċ taŕapeloċ] (property stolen from sufferers). But if we compare the whole three verses with the Greek text we see that Grigor the Archdeacon did not change but instead made an even closer translation to the original text (ἐκ χρημάτων πενήτων).

The next medieval Armenian manuscript that I could find in the Yerevan Matenadaran to contain anything about Sirach was a work called 'Թիւք որչափութեանն տանց Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանացն', [Ťiwƙ orč՝aṗowťeann tanċ Hin ew Nor Ktakaranaċn] (The number and the size of the Old and

163 In NRSV 34:23 – 25a
164 Sir. 34:24

New Testaments) by a 7th century Armenian astronomer, mathematician and geographer named Anania Širakac'i [Անանիա Շիրակացի]. Unlike the authors mentioned above, Širakac'i does not quote abundantly from Sirach. The only place where he remembers Sirach is the list of the Old Testament. He says: 'Սիրաքայ տունք ՍՊ' [Sirak'ay townk' SP] (The verses and paragraphs of Sirach).[165] However, even in its brevity it is a highly valuable testimony which underpins my hypothesis that Sirach was designated not only as an inspired book which is worth reading but as a part of the Holy Bible. The remarkable 13th century Church author Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i [Մխիթար Այրիվանեցի] in his *'Ճառընտիր'* [Čaṙəntir] (Anthology of the Homilies) like Širakac'i only mentions Sirach in a canon list under the following name, 'Սրբոյն Եւագրեա. Կարգադրութիւն Աստուածաշունչ տառիս' [Srboyn Ewagrea. Kargadrowt'iwn Astowacašownč' taṙis] (The order of the books of the Holy Scriptures according to Saint Evagrius).[166]

One interesting example of the name of Sirach being erroneously used in Armenian Medieval literature is found in the 19th chapter of Łevond's *'History'* (8th c.). This chapter depicts a letter from the Emperor Leo of Byzantium responding to the Arab Amir Omar. The Emperor says that it is not appropriate that he writes to Omar about an issue which is related to Christianity because Christians do not write to non-Christians about their faith in order to protect it from being derided:

> Այո, բազում անգամ գրեցաք առ քեզ, արդեաւք թէեւ այլ հասանիցէ գրել, վասն այլ աշխարհական կրաց, եւ ոչ վասն աստուածային իրողութեանց. Բայց մեք որք խրատեալք յաստուածայոյ ձայնէն. **'Տուք պատասխանի ամենայնի, որ հարցանենն զձեզ', իսկ ոչն հարցանէ' առ նա ոչ պատասխանել.**[167]
>
> Ayo, bazowm angam greċaḳ aṙ ḳez, ardeawḳ t'êew ayl hasaniċê grel, vasn ayl ašxarhakan kraċ, ew oč' vasn astowacayin irołowt'eanċ. Bayċ meḳ orḳ xratealḳ yastowacayoy jaynên. 'Towḳ patasxani amenayni, or harċanenn zjez', isk oč'n harċanê' aṙ na oč' patasxanel
>
> Indeed, we have written to you on many occasions and will write again but merely about earthly matters and not about matters divine. We will do it in order to follow the divine commandment which says: **'Give answer to anyone who asks you...'.**

Łevond thinks that these words are taken from Sirach, at the same time he does not give any hints which exact words he considers to be of Sirach's authorship.

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165 MM. MS N. 1518, 18th Century, p. 129a.

166 MM. MS N. 1500, p. 369b, also E. Harowt'yownyan, *'Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i'* (Yerevan: 1985), p. 222.

167 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirk' Hayoc', Vol. 6*] (Antelias, 2007), p. 764. Although found in the History of Łewond, *The Letter of Leo* was not originally written in Armenian. However, as an early translation it is still useful for our study.

There is not any command like this in Sirach and it is possible that Łevond just confused Sirach with Peter, because almost exactly the same words can be found in 1 Peter 3:15, 'Պատրաստ իցէք տալ պատասխանի ամենայնի որ խնդրիցէ զբանն', [Patrast iċêk tal patasxani amenayni or xndriċê zbann] (Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you...). This I think is the most probable verse, because it continues with '...an accounting for the hope that is in you'. The response of the Emperor contains some details about the principles of the Christian faith and that is why the Emperor, before using Peter's words, says that Christians are not used to discuss their beliefs with non-Christians. Thus, we cannot accept these words as words said by Sirach.

The next Medieval Armenian Author who incorporates extensive citations from the Book of Sirach in his works is St. Yovhan Ojnecʻi [Սբ. Յովհան Օձնեցի] (8th c.). *'Ənddêm erewowtʻakanacʻ'*, [Ընդդէմ երևութականաց] (Against the Docetists) is his famous refutation against the heresy according to which Christ's body was not human but phantasm and all his sufferings were only apparent. Ojnecʻi point by point refutes this heresy, emphasizing the danger of the wrongful teachings of Severus of Antioch. He addresses his speech to a person who symbolically represents the whole heresy and says 'Արդ, կամ եկ **խաւստովանեա յառաջասացելոցն զքեզ', [Ard, kam ek xawstovanea yaŕajasaċeloċn zkez] (Now either come (singular) and confess what was taught you or...). Listing all the heretical points of Docetism Ojnecʻi adds, 'Գոյ հնար թուել զխիղճս հեղեղատի, եւ զաւազ ծովու, եւ զշիթս անձրեւի, եւ ոչ զստեղծեալն առ ի քէն նորագիւտ բանս եւ իրս',[168] [Goy hnar ṫowel zxiłčs hełełati, ew zawaz covow, ew zšiṫs anjrewi, ew oč' zstełcealn aŕ i ǩên noragiwt bans ew irs] (It is possible to count the clods of the valley, the sand of the sea, the drops of rain but not the novel and faulty doctrines of yours). Here Ojnecʻi [Ոձնեցի] tries to say that the number of deceitful innovations which lead people astray is so large that it can not be compared even with the number of the grains of sand or the drops of rain.**

Evidently, this comparison is done with the help of Sirach 1:2, 'The sand of the sea, the drops of rain and the days of eternity – who can count them?'. The only difference in meaning is that Sirach 1:2 states that counting the sand of the sea and the drops of rain is not possible for human beings. It is actually a combination of two verses, one from Sirach which we have already identified and the second is from the Book of Job. The expression 'clods of the valley' is from Job 21:33 'The clods of the valley are sweet to them...' used however in an absolutely different context. As we see, Job – in a style characteristic to this book – says

168 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ, Vol. 8* (Antelias, 2007), p. 53].

that he has been put in such a bad condition that even the clods of the valley were sweet to him. Ojnecʻi uses this expression along with the sand of the sea and the drops of rain to show that it is likewise impossible to count the clods of the valley.

Xosrov Anjevacʻi [Խոսրով Անձեվացի] (10th c.), who was mentioned above in his commentary on the litanies and prayers of the Church hours, 'Բացատրութիւն կարգաց եկեղեցւոյ քարոզութեանց եւ աղաւէից' [Baċatrowtiwn kargaċ ekełeċwoy ǩarozowteanċ ew aławêiċ] (Explanation of the orders of the church preaching and agapes) writes about the snares Satan always uses to try to keep the man away from confession and repentance. Then he exhorts the reader not to hesitate to confess 'otherwise you will be defeated by the evil one'[169]. As with almost all other Armenian Medieval authors who refer to Sirach, Anjevacʻi also does not mention Sirach's name but just makes use of a reference saying, 'Մի յաւր աւր առնել դառնալ առ Տէր' [Mi yawr awr aṙnel daṙnal aṙ Têr] ([Do not delay to turn back to the Lord and] do not postpone it from day to day).[170] Both Armenian translations have the first part of this verse of Sirach but neither of them has the second part of it, 'Մի **յաւր աւր առնել դառնալ առ Տէր' [Mi yawr awr aṙnel daṙnal aṙ Têr] (do not postpone it from day to day). Either there was a manuscript available in the 10th century which contained the second part of this verse and which has been lost or Anjevacʻi used a Greek text of Sirach.**

Another author from the 10th century Simeon Ałjnecʻi produced a piece of homiletic writing called 'Վասն գինոյ խմողաց, որ արբենան եւ վասն գուսանաց եւ վասն պոռնիկ կանանց [Vasn ginoy xmołaċ, or arbenan ew vasn gowsanaċ ew vasn poṙnik kananċ] (About those who drink wine and get drunk, the gousans (troubadours) and the prostitutes) saying that the gousans become stumbling blocks for people and push them to wicked desires. He continues his speech, incorporating the following words of Sirach with his own slight revision,

As adapted by Simeon Ałjnecʻi	Sirach
Զի զերիս իրս ատէ Աստուած. զաղքատս ամբարտաւանս եւ զծերս պոռնիկս եւ զմեծատունս սուտս:[171]	Երիցս ինչ ատեաց անձն իմ, եւ յոյժ ծանրացայ յկենօք նոցա: Զաղքատն հպարտ, եւ զմեծատունն սուտ, զծեր զգաշոտ եւ պակասեալ ի մտաց:[172]
[Zi zeris irs atê Astowac. załǩats ambartawans	

169 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [*Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ, Vol. 10* (Antelias, 2009), p. 148].
170 Sir. 5:8 in the Armenian (Zôhrapean version), 5:7 in Greek and English.
171 Մատենագիրք Հայոց [Matenagirkʻ Hayocʻ, Vol. 10 (Antelias, 2009), p. 148].
172 Sir. 25:3 – 4, 25:2 in Greek and English.

As adapted by Simeon Ałjnecʻi	Sirach
ew zcers poṙniks ew zmecatowns sowts] (God hates three things: an arogant pauper, an old person who commits adultery and a rich person who lies).	[Eriċs inčʻ ateaċ anjn im, ew yoyž canraċay ykenôḵ noċa: Załḵatn hpart, ew zmecatownn sowt, zcer gagašot ew pakaseal i mtaċ] (I hate three kinds of people, and loathe their manner of life: a pauper who boasts, a rich person who lies, and an old fool who commits adultery).

In the Zôhrapean edition ‘զալեւոր պոռնիկ’ [zalewor poṙnik] is used instead of ‘զծեր զազաշոտի’. [zcer gagašoti] խծBoth of these versions can be translated into English as ‘an old adulterer’. These three characters presented in the book of Sirach are considered bad and punishable by Sirach himself. But in Ałjnecʻi homily it is God who hates these wicked characters and not Sirach. There are two reasons why Ałjnecʻi uses the word ‘God’ instead of ‘Sirach’. First, it is done in order to stress the wickedness of that kind of behaviour, for if Ałjnecʻi had only said that he hates them or Sirach hates them it would not cause the same impact as to say that they are hated by God.

The change from ‘Անձն իմ’ [Anjn im] (My soul) to ‘Աստուած’ [Astowac] (God) also can be interpreted according to the view that whatever is written in the Bible is God-inspired, thus everything written there which has an exhortative character is said by God.

The Book of Sirach was extensively used by St. Grigor Narekacʻi [Սբ. Գրիգոր Նարեկացի] (10th c.) as well. Narekacʻi in his Book of Lamentations (Մատեան ողբերգութեան) [Matean ołbergowtʻean] which is regarded by Armenians as the second most important book after the Bible, refers to Sirach around 50 times.

In his 30th Prayer (Բան Լ) [Ban L] poetically describing a sinner, Narekacʻi [Նարեկացի] says,

> Արդարեւ վա՛յ **մեղավորին,**
> **Որ տարակուսեալ կայցէ ի վերայ երկուց ճանապարհաց,**
> **Ըստ հոգելից բանի իմաստնոյն:**[173]

173 Գրիգոր Նարեկացի, ողբերգութեան [Grigor Narekacʻi, *Matean Vołbergowtʻean* [The Book of Lamentantions] (eds. P. Xačʻatryan, A. Łazinyan, [Պ. Խաչատրյան, Ա. Ղազինյան] Yerevan, 1985), p. 367. The English translation of the same book is referred as ‘Speaking to God from The Depths of The Heart’.

Ardarew vaʹy meławorin,
Or tarakowseal kayċê i veray erkowċ čanaparhaċ,
Əst hogeliċ bani imastnoyn

In the words of the soulful wise man,
Truly woeful is the sinner,
standing in doubt at the fork in the road

Sirach again is called 'a wise man' without having his name mentioned and his book is called 'a spiritual word'. The third line from the three (first in English translation) belongs to Narekacʻi's pen and the other two to Sirach. There are differences though between Narekacʻi's version and the Grabar editions of the Bible. In the Bagratowni Bible, verse 2:14[174] of Sirach which is used by Narekacʻi [Նարեկացի] is as follows: **'Վաʹյ սրտից վատթարաց եւ ձեռաց լքելոց, եւ մեղավորի՛ որ ելանէ յերկու շաւիղս' [Vay srtiċ vatʻaraċ ew jerāċ lkeloċ, ew meławori՛ or elanê yerkow šawiłs] and in the Zôhrapean [Զօհրապեան] 'Վաʹյ սրտից վատաց եւ ձեռաց լքելոց, եւ մեղաւորի՛ որ հասեալ իցէ ի վերայ երկուց ճանապարհաց'. [Vaʹy srtiċ vataċ ew jerāċ lkeloċ, ew meławori՛ or haseal iċê i veray erkowċ čanaparhac] The highlighted parts are those used by Narekacʻi. The word 'կայցէ' [kayċê] (standing) became 'ելանէ' [elanê] (going out to) in the Bagratowni Bible and 'հասեալ իցէ' [haseal iċê] (reaches) in the Zôhrapean. It is obvious that for this verse Zôhrapean is the closer to Narekacʻi's version. Even the use of the word 'ճանապարհաց' [čanaparhaċ] (road) ('շաւիղ' [šawił] (path) in Bagratowni) in Zôhrapean shows that its source is the same as that which was used by Narekacʻi. On the other hand, comparing the Bagratowni version with the Greek and English translations we see that it is closer to these two more than to Zôhrapean's version. In both Narekacʻi's and Zôhrapean's versions of verse 2:14 the sinner is standing at the junction of the roads and does not move. But in the Bagratowni and English versions the sinner is metaphorically walking on a double path. A big difference in terms of meaning is that according to Narekacʻi and to the Zôhrapean version, the sinner has not yet chosen his way and the sin is not specified, but in Bagratowni as well as the English and Greek texts the sinner has already chosen his way and is walking both ways, i. e. pretending to be righteous whilst he also lives a hidden life as a sinner.**

In the Prayer 70 (Բան Հ) [Ban H] Narekacʻi again refers to Sirach ch. 2, now using verses 22–23 as a support for his statement,

174 Sir. 2:18 in NRSV.

Բարի է ըստ իմաստնոյ ումեմն երջանկի,
Անկանել ի ձեռս Տեառն եւ մի՛ ի ձեռն մարդկան,
Զի որպէս մեծութիւն նորա՝ եւ ողորմութիւն Նորին:[175]

Bari ê əst imastnoy owmemn erǰanki,
Ankanel i jeŗs Teaŗn ew mi i jeŗn mardkan,
Zi orpês mecowt'iwn nora' ew ołormowt'iwn Norin

It is better according to a happy wise man to fall into the hands of the Lord,
than to fall into the hands of men,
For as great as He is, so also is His mercy.

Prayer 70 is generally about God's judgment. Especially in the last line of this passage, Narekac'i emphasizes the greatness of the Lord and his endless mercy. In the first line Sirach is called 'a *happy* wise man' instead of the previous 'a wise man'. The reason why Sirach is here called 'happy' is probably Sirach's own assertion that 'Happy is the person who meditates on wisdom'.[176] The biblical source of the above mentioned reference is as follows:

Zôhrapean	Bagratowni
Անկցուք մեք ի ձեռս Աստուծոյ, եւ մի ի ձեռս մարդկան, զի որպէս մեծութիւն Նորա, նոյնպէս և ողորմութիւն: [Ankc̣owk̔ mek̔ i jeŗs Astowcoy, ew mi i jeŗs mardkan, zi orpês mecowt'iwn Nora, noynpês ew ołormowt'iwn]. (Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, but not into the hands of mortals; for equal to his majesty is his mercy).	Անկցուք ի ձեռս Տեառն, եւ մի ի ձեռս մարդկան: Զի որպէս մեծութիւն Նորա, նոյնպէս եւ ողորմութիւն Նորա: [Ankc̣owk̔ i jeŗs Teaŗn, ew mi i jeŗs mardkan: Zi orpês mecowt'iwn Nora, noynpês ew ołormowt'iwn Nora]

One characteristic common to both the Bagratowni and Zôhrapean editions is the word 'անկցուք' [ankc̣owk̔] (let us fall) instead of which Narekac'i uses 'անկանել' [ankanel] (to fall), the infinitive form of the verb. It is worth mentioning that the Greek (ἐμπεσούμεθα) as well as NRSV (let us fall) are similar to the Armenian translation.

In chapter 56, Narekac'i speaks about the roots of the bitter fruit of the tree of damnation which caused death and lists different kinds of sinful behaviour which cause death.

175 Grigor Narekac'i, '*Matean Vołbergowt'ean*', p. 526.
176 Sir. 14:20. My discussion of Sirach's views on happiness is under the title 'The Main Themes of Sirach...'.

Աւազակ ծովակուր, զինուոր նենգաւոր,
Մարտիկ անպատրաստ, սպառազէն անժուժկալ,
Մշակ հեղգացեալ, աղաւթական անխրախոյս,
Բեմական ստորնաքարշ, քահանայ անկնդրուկ,
Աւրինական աննուէր, դպիր կշտամբեալ... (Prayer 56).

Awazak covakowr, zinowor nengawor,
Martik anpatrast, spaṙazên anžowžkal,
Mšak hełgaċeal, aławtakan anxraxoys,
Bemakan stornaťarš, ťahanay ankndrowk,
Awrinakan annowêr, dpir kštambeal...

Drowning pirate, treasonous soldier,
reluctant fighter, undisciplined warrior,
slovenly labourer, faithless worshipper,
worldly cleric, impious priest,
officious minister, haughty clerk...

Of immediate relevance to these lines is the previously mentioned verse from Sirach 'a pauper who boasts, a rich person who lies, and an old fool who commits adultery...'[177]. Thus Narekac'i has added these as well to his long list of blameworthy behaviour.

Պաշտաւնեայ արբեցող, գանձուց ոստիկան երկմիտ,
Պատգամաւոր բանսարկու, դրնապան երկմիտ,
Աղքատ հպարտ, մեծատուն ժխտող
Դիւանապետ անօրէն, պահապան մատնիչ:

Paštawneay arbeċoł, ganjowċ ostikan erkmit,
Patgamawor bansarkow, dṙnapan erkmit,
Ałťat hpart, mecatown žxtoł
Diwanapet anôren, pahapan matnič'

Drunken official, duplicitous treasure warden,
dissension sowing emissary, sleeping doorman,
proud beggar, rich ingrate,
dishonest secretary, untrustworthy custodian.

Narekac'i uses these verses of Sirach in the same context as the latter. That is why there are many similarities even stylistically between Narekac'i's Prayer 56 and certain chapters of Sirach.

St. Grigor Tat'ewac'i (14th c.), who is one of the most remarkable theologians and philosophers of the Armenian Church and the last officially canonized saint

177 Sir. 25:2.

of the Armenian Church, in his Commentary on the Gospel according to John refers to the Book of Sirach four times.

Commenting on the first verse of the chapter 1, 'In the beginning was the Word' he follows the old exegetical practice and calls this verse 'Աստուածաբանութիւն' [Astowacabanowtiwn] (Θεολογία or theology). Then combining the phrase 'Ի սկզբանէ էր Բանն' [I skzbanê êr Bann] (In the beginning was the word) and the 'theology' Tat'ewac'i adds, 'Յառաջ քան զամենայն **ստեղծաւ իմաստութիւն, եւ հանճար յաւիտենից',[178] [Yaŕaǰ ǩan zamenayn stełcaw imastowtiwn, ew hančar yawitenič] (Wisdom was created before all other things, and prudent understanding ['genius' in the Armenian translations] from eternity). Tat'ewac'i thus in the 14th century already shows a precise understanding of the theological links between the 'wisdom' of the New Testament, Jesus and the 'wisdom' which is widely described and praised in the Wisdom literature of the OT, particularly in the Book of Sirach.**

Although Tat'ewac'i is a relatively recent author, two noticeably different versions of this reference can be found in different manuscripts. There is a major change made in the first part of this sentence: previously written 'ստեղծաւ' [stełcaw] (was created) became here[179] 'հաստատեցաւ', [hastateċaw] (was established). 'Յառաջ քան զամենայն **հաստատեցաւ իմաստութիւն' [Yaŕaǰ ǩan zamenayn hastateċaw imastowtiwn] (Wisdom was established before all other things). The second part starts with a slight alteration as well. Instead of only 'հանճար' (prudent understanding), the word 'զգօնութիւն' [zgônowtiwn] (vigilance) also appears (vigilance and prudent understanding from eternity). Here presumably Tat'ewac'i used a translation of Sirach which contains the word 'զգօնութիւն', [zgônowtiwn] 'vigilence'. Interestingly, neither LXX nor NRSV have this word. At the same time both Zôhrapean and Bagratowni as well as the Modern Armenian translations have it. As for the word 'հաստատեցաւ', [hastateċaw] (was established), I think that Tat'ewac'i just interpreted the word 'was created' in this way in order to avoid the discrepancy with John 1:1 and any implication that the 'Word' could be created.**

As I mentioned already Tat'ewac'i calls the first phrase of John 1:1 'Theology'. He compares the 'theology' of this verse with the understanding of 'Wisdom' and ends up using the word 'theology' in his reference from Sirach instead of the word 'Wisdom': 'Our 'theology' is called 'Wisdom' because it gives us to know the heavenly [things], which were not created by us. It is also called 'prudent un-

178 Sir. 1:4.

179 MM. MS N. 1394, 1437, p. 172a.

derstanding [‘հանճար’, (genius) in the Armenian translations] because it teaches the virtues, bearers of which we can be’.[180]

Tat‘ewac‘i then describes theology as a ‘noble birth’ for it was established by God himself and says that it can only be given to human beings through the Holy Spirit: ‘Այսինքն‘ յայտնեաց եւ ի միտս գրողաց Սուրբ գրոց եհեղ, որպէս ասէ Սիրաք’,[181] [Aysinkn‘ yaytneac‘ ew i mits grołac‘ Sowrb groc‘ eheł, orpês asê Sirak‘] (Therefore, God revealed and poured His Holy Spirit upon the writers of the Holy Scripture, as Sirach says). The quotation from Sirach found in Tat‘ewac‘i’s text differs significantly from the text in Zôhrapean’s Bible. The comparision of the Tat‘ewac‘i text with the same text in Bagratowni’s Bible is presented below.

Sirach (Tat‘ewac‘i)	Sirach (Bagratowni)
Նա Ինքն Աստուած ստեղծ զնա ի Հոգի Սուրբ, եւ թուեաց եւ սփռեաց յամենայն արարածս իւր: [Na Inkn Astowac stełc zna i Hogi Sowrb, ew ťoweac‘ ew sp̌rеac‘ yamenayn araracs iwr]. (He Himself established it by the Holy Spirit. He took her measure and lavished her upon all His creatures).	Ինքն Տէր հաստատեաց զնա, եւ ետես եւ թուեաց զնա, եւ եհեղ զնա ի վերայ գործոց Իւրոց, ընդ ամենայն մարմնոյ ըստ պարգեւի Իւրում, եւ բաշխեաց զնա սիրելեաց Իւրոց: [Inkn Têr hastateac‘ zna, ew etes ew ťoweac‘ zna, ew eheł zna i veray gorcoc‘ Iwroc‘, ənd amenayn marmnoy əst pargewi Iwrowm, ew bašxeac‘ zna sireleac‘ Iwroc‘] (It is he who created her; he saw her and took her measure; he poured her out upon all his works, upon all the living according to his gift; he lavished her upon those who love him).[182]

The first word in Tat‘ewac‘i’s version which needs an explanation is ‘ստեղծ’[183] ([he] created). None of the Armenian translations uses this word. Instead they use the word ‘հաստատեաց’, [hastateac‘] (established). Tat‘ewac‘i’s version of this word is more correct because it is the exact translation of the word ‘ἔκτισεν’ in the LXX which is translated as ‘created’. In the previous passage Tat‘ewac‘i tried to avoid describing wisdom as a creature, attributing this word to Christ. Here though he uses it without fear of being misinterpreted. Tat‘ewac‘i

180 Գրիգոր Տաթեւացի, Մեկնութիւն Յովհաննու Աւետարանի [Grigor Tat‘ewac‘i, *Meknowťiwn Yovhannow Awetarani*] [Commentary on the Gospel of John] (comparative text by Łowkas Zak̆aryan [Ղուկաս Զաքարյան], Etchmiadzin, 2005), p. 31.

181 Գրիգոր Տաթեւացի, Մեկնութիւն Յովհաննու Աւետարանի [Grigor Tat‘ewac‘i, ‘*Meknowťiwn Yovhannow Awetarani*, p. 30].

182 Sir. 1:9 – 10.

183 Greek- ἔκτισεν.

speaks here about wisdom which is given by God to His creatures, particularly to the writer of the Holy Scriptures. That is why he adds 'Ի Հոգի Սուրբ', [I Hogi Sowrb] (from the Holy Spirit) to show that they were written inspired by the Holy Spirit. The word 'poured' is also skipped by Tat'ewac'i but only in this particular reference. We remember from above that he has already mentioned the fact that God poured His Holy Spirit upon the writers of the Holy Scripture. So, though not explicitly, he does say it implicitly.

The last part of this sentence 'սփռեաց յամենայն արարածս Իւր', [sp̣rēaċ yamenayn araracs Iwr] (lavished upon all His creatures) is interpreted by Tat'ewac'i within the context of the New Testament. He says that these words of Sirach mean that the Holy Spirit has been spread upon the apostles of Jesus, other disciples and all the Christians of the world.

Another reference from Sirach in this commentary is very interesting because Tat'ewac'i uses it to compare Theology with other kinds of science. He says that although science points to the truth, it can also be deceitful and misleading. Because science is founded on human intelligence it always tends to fail but as theology is founded on the Holy Bible it becomes the revealer (հայտնիչ) [haytnič'] of the truth. 'Վասն որոյ ասէ Սիրաք. աղբիւր իմաստութեան է Բանն Աստուծոյ ի բարձունս'.[184] [Vasn oroy asê Sirak̆. ałbiwr imastowt̆ean ê Bann Astowcoy i barjowns] (For because of this Sirach says, 'The source of wisdom is the Word of God in the highest'). It is important to say that this sentence is missing from both of the Grabar versions and is only found in the Modern Armenian translation of 1994.[185]

Among all the references from Sirach, this last reference is the most important one, first, because it gives us the exact Grabar text of this verse, lost and missing from both the Zôhrapean and Bagratowni Bibles and second, because it shows the difference between the meaning of the existing Grabar text of this verse and that of the Modern Armenian translation. According to Tat'ewac'i's version the source of wisdom is the Word of God who is in the highest. But in the Modern translation instead of 'God in the highest' the phrase is translated as 'the most high God'. Here again introducing the phrase 'Word of God' as theologia he says that in this reference from Sirach the 'Word' proves the truthfulness of theology in three ways. First, it teaches the credibility of many qualities of God and for that reason it is said that the Word is the 'source of wisdom'. Second, saying 'Word of God' it shows the different features of the Divine persons.

184 Sir. 1:5.

185 This verse is missing from the English NRSV as well. It skips from verse 4 to 6 saying in the footnote that other ancient authorities add as verse 5 'The source of wisdom is God's word in the highest heaven, and her ways are eternal commandments'.

And finally, it discloses the beauty and the highness of the divine mysteries and wonders which are 'ի բարձունս' [i barjowns] (in the highest).

The last one of the three points which talk about the mysteries of God clearly shows that, unlike the Modern translation, the Grabar text which was used by Tatʿewacʿi had 'Աստուած ի բարձունս', [Astowac i barjowns] (God in the Highest) and not 'Բարձրեալն Աստուած' [Barjrealn Astowac] (Most High God).

Thus, Tatʿewacʿi comments on this verse of Sirach examining the three theological meanings of it as: 'Source or fountain of wisdom', 'Word of God' and 'God in the Highest'.

Observing John 4:14[186] where Jesus says, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again', Grigor Tatʿewacʿi writes that the water which is the same as the Baptismal water is the Holy Spirit. We are being baptized only once for we do not need second baptism. In other words we do not become thirsty again after receiving 'the water'. The ultimate point of Tatʿewacʿi is that the grace of the Holy Spirit gushes up to eternal life where no one becomes thirsty. Those who argue against this, says Tatʿewacʿi, refer to the following verse of Jesus Son of Sirach;[187]

Sirach (Tatʿewacʿi)	Sirach (Bagratowni)
Որ ըմպէ յինէն, դարձեալ փափագեսցի յիս:[188] [Or əmpê yinên, darjeal ṗaṗagesċi yis]. (He, who drinks me, will again want me).	Ոյք ուտեն զիս՝ տակաւին քաղցիցեն, Եւ ոյք ըմպեն զիս՝ տակաւին ծարաւեսցին: [Oyḱ owten zis' takawin ḱałċiċen, Ew oyḱ əmpen zis' takawin carawesċin]. (Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more).[189]

The highlighted part of the verse in Sirach differs theologically from Tatʿewacʿi's version. The word 'ծարաւել' [carawel] (to become thirsty) found in the Bagratowni text is better describing how one can drink and become thirsty again and thus it perfectly describes Tatʿewacʿi's comparison of the water and the Holy Spirit. The word 'փափագիմ' [ṗaṗagim] (to desire) which is actually used in Tatʿe-

186 In Grabar and Modern Armenian translations this sentence is part of verse 4:13 instead of 4:14.

187 It is not clear who Tatʿewacʿi is speaking about here, because he does not give particular names of any sects or heretics

188 Գրիգոր Տաթևացի, Մեկնութիւն Յովհաննու Աւետարանի [Grigor Tatʿewacʿi, '*Meknowṫiwn Yovhannow Awetarani*', p. 188].

189 Sir. 24:29 in Grabar and 24:21 in NRSV.

wacʻi's commentary does not fully and deeply give the impression of pondering God. Of this particular verse, Tatʻewacʻi says; 'The Vardapets say that the thirst is known in three ways. First, every time a person eats and drinks, his desire of eating and drinking ceases just for a while. Thus the physical bread and water do not make the hunger and thirst vanish but they stop it only temporarily. Second, thirst shows or symbolizes the desire of human beings to aspire to excellence (Փափագի կատարելագոյն եւս ունել).[190] [Pʻapʻagi katarelagoyn ews ownel]. And he finishes his reflection on his final reference from Sirach with this: 'Որպէս մարդ, որ շնորհաւք ընդունի զաստուածայինքն, ոչ ծարաւի, թէ շնորհաւք բնակեսցէ ի նմա, սակայն ծարաւէ, զի կատարելագոյն կերպիւ ունիցի, այսինքն' փառաւք, եւ սոյնպէս իմանի բանն Յոսուայ' որդւոյն Սիրաքայ'[191] [Orpês mard, or šnorhawkʻ əndowni zastowacayinkʻn, očʻ carawi, tʻê šnorhawkʻ bnakesċê i nma, sakayn carawê, zi katarelagoyn kerpiw ownicʻi, aysinkʻnʻ pʻarawkʻ, ew soynpês imani bann Yosowayʻ ordwoyn Sirakʻay]. (A person who by the grace [of God] accepts divine [gifts] does not feel thirst to accept them again but he rather feels thirsty to have fully [ideally] them [the gifts] in him. The words of Jesus son of Sirach are exactly about it).

Summerizing this chapter we can see that the Book of Sirach has been an important source for Medieval Armenian authors as well as for many fathers of other Christian Churches. On the other hand, a lack of sufficient use of this book can be noticed when reading works of the Armenian authors of the 11th–17th centuries. Only in the 18th century with the development of the Mechitarist congregation in Venice did interest in this book among scholars start to grow. Of course, the pinnacle of Armenian scholarship about Sirach is the commentary written by Hacob Nalean and for that reason a part of this thesis is about Yakob Nalean and his valuable work.

2.4 Textual Sources of the Armenian Translation of Sirach

For decades, scholars have been trying to find the parent text of Sirach. Although it is known that the book was originally written in Hebrew, we cannot use the Hebrew version as a parent text for the entire book as a significant portion of the Hebrew original remains undiscovered. On top of this, it has even been

190 Գրիգոր Տաթևացի, Մեկնութիւն Յովհաննու Աւետարանի [Grigor Tatʻewacʻi, '*Meknowtʻiwn Yovhannow Awetarani*', p. 188].
191 Գրիգոր Տաթևացի, Մեկնութիւն Յովհաննու Աւետարանի [Grigor Tatʻewacʻi, '*Meknowtʻiwn Yovhannow Awetarani*', p. 188].

proved difficult to identify the most authentic Hebrew version among the extant texts of the book because of the absence of a complete text. Benjamin Wright, in his 1989 doctoral dissertation on Sirach's relationship to its Hebrew parent text, says, 'Due to the fragmentary state of preservation of all the Hebrew MSS of Sir. one single manuscript cannot be chosen to fulfil this function because no single extant Hebrew manuscript includes all the passages in which Hebrew material has been preserved'.[192] This is why the Greek text has dominated over the centuries, being used as the source of translations into many languages, including the recensed Armenian translation. It has been known also, that the Greek text of Sirach is not a literal translation of the Hebrew, but yet it gives a very good idea of what the author of this book desired to share with others. As Oesterley notes,

> Ben Sira's grandson clearly does not consider it the duty of the translator to give anything in the shape of a literal translation of his original; He seeks, rightly, to present as far as possible a well-constructed Greek interpretation rather than a slavish reproduction of what he translated.[193]

Speaking about the most ancient versions of Sirach, Alexander Di Lella examined the textual witnesses of Hebrew and Greek versions. In common with certain other scholars, Di Lella also referred to c. Kearns, whose analysis he adopted and expanded.[194] There are four known sources of Sirach. The first source, HI, is the Hebrew original of Sirach and HII denotes the expanded Hebrew text of one or more recensions. GI refers to the Grandson's translation from Hebrew and GII the expanded Greek translation.

2.4.1 Hebrew Version of Sirach

The fact that the Armenian version of the OT was not translated from Hebrew but from other languages has never been a matter of doubt. As a result, Hebrew has very rarely been used by Armenian biblical scholars in their research on the different books of the Bible. Meanwhile, as a parent text for all other intermediary translations such as Syriac and Greek, Hebrew original texts have been widely examined in Western scholarship.

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192 B. Wright, *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), p 16.

193 G. Box, W. Oesterley, 'Sirach' in *Apocrypha of the Old Testament Vol. 1* (*ed. R. Charles*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p. 279.

194 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 55.

The original Hebrew version of Sirach, written at the beginning of the second century B.C.E., was quickly translated into Greek to reach those Jews who spoke Greek. A new Hebrew recension known as HII was made, based on the original Hebrew of the author and the first Greek translation (GI). Over the centuries, new revisions of the Hebrew text had come into existence which were either developed from the Hebrew version of the author or were recensed in combination with Syriac and Greek texts. In 1934, M. Segal published a paper in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* on the Syriac version of Sirach, in which he gave valuable information on the Hebrew original text and the later influence of Syriac and Greek versions on it.[195]

Whilst never being in the Jewish canon, the Book of Sirach was widely used among the Jews until the 12th century when the Hebrew version of it disappeared.[196] Rabbis knew that Sirach belonged to the sacred literature and revered it as 'being divine in origin and normative for the community'.[197] Hence, the use of it was not banned by Rabbi Akiva.[198] David Levene draws attention to the fact that all the quotations from Sirach in rabbinic literature are of aphoristic 'non-theological' rather than theological character.

> Overwhelmingly what are quoted are aphoristic proverbs taken without context. There is not a single quotation from the last portion of the book, the praise of Jewish heroes in chs. 44–50. Nor are there even any quotations from the overtly theological portions of the book: none, for example, from the discussion of wisdom and freedom of choice in chs. 14–18. The focus is instead on maxims providing practical advice for living a proper life. This is one reason (though far from the only one) that has been suggested that the text of Ben Sira that the Rabbis were using was not the book in the form that we have it today, but rather a florilegium of maxims taken from it.[199]

The fact that rabbis used only the moral and not theological parts of Sirach makes Levene think that there were aspects in the book which rabbis may have been uncomfortable with, e.g. the strong personification of Wisdom in ch. 24, or there may had been theological statements in Sirach which rabbis had been aware of and which had been lost throughout many recensions of the book.

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195 M. Segal, 'The Evolution of the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira' in *JQR*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Oct. 1934), pp. 91–149, cf. M. D. Nelson, '*The Syriac Version of The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', pp. 2–8.

196 I. Lévi, *The Hebrew Text of The Book of Ecclesiasticus* (Leiden: Brill, 1904), pp. V-VI.

197 G. Veltri, '*Libraries, Translations, and 'Canonic' Texts*', p. 190.

198 D. S. Levene, 'Theology and Non-Theology in the Rabbinic Ben Sira' in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2002), p. 307.

199 D. S. Levene, '*Theology and Non-Theology in the Rabbinic Ben Sira*', p. 306.

That Sirach was regarded more than just a book of moral maxims is apparent to us. Akiva ben Joseph, widely known as Rabbi Akiva, mentions Sirach alongside some other books which did not make it into the Tanakh, indirectly indicating that Sirach had a higher status, different from the Greek philosophical or poetic books of the day:

> "Also he who reads external books" – for example, the books of Ben Sira and the books of Ben La'anah. But the books of Homer and all the books written subsequently, one who reads in them is like someone reading in a letter. Why? And furthermore, my son, beware etc. [Ecclesiastes 12:12]: they were given for casual reading but were not given for study.[200]

Akiva considered Sirach as an 'external book' but yet with the possibility of studying and using it for oral recitation. By contrast, the works of Homer and the like were just designated for 'casual reading'.

A great turning point in the scholarship of the Hebrew version of this book came in 1896 when Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson brought some scrolls from Cairo Geniza to England, which were identified by Solomon Schechter as fragments of the Hebrew text of Sirach. The MSS were soon designated by Schechter himself as MSS A, B, C and D. Another MS from Cairo Geniza was found by Joseph Marcus in 1931. In his book published in 1931, Marcus recovered the text of the newly found MS E and translated it into English.[201] Straight after these great discoveries, many disputes arose over the authenticity of the Geniza fragments. A prominent scholar on this subject, Israel Lévi, was sure that the findings were the Hebrew originals: 'Today, happily, we have the original itself, i. e., two thirds of it'. This 'happiness' though was not shared by all his scholarly contemporaries. Professor D. Margolouth from Oxford was one of the scholars who argued against the authenticity of the Geniza scrolls. He wrote a pamphlet in 1899 in which he argued that the fragments were actually retranslated from the Greek and Syriac texts of Sirach by a Persian Jew.[202] Soon after Margolouth's hypothesis was published, many scholars refuted it. W. Bacher, for example, in his article published in the same year called Margolouth's theory a 'romance pictured to himself'.[203] A. Di Lella in his book on the Hebrew Text of Sirach published in 1966 addresses the arguments of nearly all the opponents of the authenticity

200 D. S. Levene, *'Theology and Non-Theology in the Rabbinic Ben Sira'*, p. 307.
201 J. Marcus, *The Newly Discovered Original Hebrew of Ben Sira: The Fifth Manuscript and A Prosodic Version of Ben Sira* (Philadelphia, 1931).
202 D. S. Margolouth, *The Origin of the 'Original Hebrew' of Ecclesiasticus* (London: James Parker & Co, 1899), p. 4.
203 Bacher, W., 'An Hypothesis about the Hebrew Fragments of Sirach', in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, (1899), pp. 92 – 108.

of the Geniza text up to the time of the publication of his book.[204] Di Lella addresses the arguments of G. Bickell, E. Goodspeed, M. Hades, c. Torrey and H. Ginsberg, refuting all of them throughout his book and demonstrating that the Geniza scrolls are authentic.

Later discoveries amongst the Dead Sea scrolls, first in 1956 and then in 1965 of fragments of Sirach, have supplied further material for the study of this book. These were fragments from chapters 6 and 51, in which the text of 6:20 – 31 was found to be identical with the same texts in MS A.[205] The publication of Qumran MS 2Q18 by M. Baillet[206] and 11QPs[a][207] containing respectively Sir. 6:14, 15 (or 1:19 – 20); 6:20 – 31 and 51:13, 20, 30b has added further interest to the subject of the Hebrew text of Sirach.

The latest and very significant discovery of Sirach in Hebrew was the MS excavated by Y. Yadin in Masada in 1965 which is dated from the first century B.C.E.[208] It consists of Sir. 39:27 – 44:17. If the previous excavations of Qumran could not completely prove the authenticity of the Geniza scrolls, the Masada portion of Sirach has finally closed this question, leaving no doubt that these texts represent the original Hebrew version.

2.4.2 Syriac Version of Sirach

As has been established, the Armenian text of Ben-Sira was translated first from Syriac and was then combined in recension with the Greek translation (GII). The Syriac text of Sirach was not adequately examined until the mid-20th century. In a recent article on the Syriac version of Sirach, Wido van Peursen describes in an accurate and insightful way the Syriac translation of Sirach (Bar Sira in Syriac)

204 A. Di Lella, *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical And Historical Study* (London: Mountain & Co., 1966), pp. 27 – 46.

205 A. Di Lella, '*The Hebrew Text of Sirach*', pp. 78 – 9.

206 M. Baillet, J. Milik, R. de Vaux, *Les* '*Petites Grottes*' *de Qumrân*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), cf. J. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* (trans. J. Strugnell, London: SCM Press, 1959), pp. 31 – 32.

207 J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11: Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, vol. 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 79 – 85. Cf. P. C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 13 – 9.

208 Cf. Y. Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada: With Introduction, Emendations and Commentary* (Jerusalem, 1965).

and the existing commentaries on this book.[209] Based on this article I found some striking similarities in several details between both the Armenian and Syriac texts of Sirach. Van Peursen does not discuss the Armenian text but his remarks on canonicity and the use of Sirach in the Syriac liturgical environment are helpful for understanding the role of this book in the Armenian context.

Speaking about the quotations from Sirach which are to be found in the works of Ephrem the Syrian, Pseudo-Ephrem, Aphrahat and other writers, van Peursen notes that some MSS containing these works predate the earliest known biblical MSS which contain Sirach. This fact has given rise to a theory that in the pre-Peshitta period there used to be a Vetus Syra of Sirach translation which was used by the Syriac authors in their works instead of Peshitta.[210] The same can be said in the case of the Armenian MSS of the homilies of St. John Chrysostom (5th c.), the apologetic work by Grigor the Archdeacon (6th-7th c.) called 'A message to St. Gregory the Illuminator addressed in the Holy city of Jerusalem', and also some later sources which contain quotations from Sirach. I discuss these references earlier in the section 2.3, 'References from the Book of Sirach in Medieval Armenian and Translated Literature'.

The first edition containing the translation of the book of Sirach from Syriac into Latin was made by the Maronite monk Gabriel Sionite in the 17th century, based on a poor MS of the same century.[211] One of the recent translations from Syriac (Codex Ambrosianus) into English and Spanish was made by N. Calduch-Benages, Joan Ferrer and Jan Liesen in 2003. They based their work on the oldest known MS of the Syriac text from Milan. In the preface to their work the authors say that their translation does not pretend to be a critical edition but rather a diplomatic edition.[212] R. Smend also had the same opinion about the Syriac translation.

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209 W. van Peursen, 'Ben Sira in the Syriac Tradition' in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira: Transmission and Interpretation* (ed. J. Rey and J. Joosten, Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 143 – 65.

210 M. M. Winter, *Ben Sira in Syriac* (Ph.D. diss. Freiburg, 1974), Wido van Peursen argues convincingly against this opinion, stating that this assertion is not proven and cannot be maintained, cf. W. van Peursen, 'Ben Sira in the Syriac Tradition' in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira: Transmission and Interpretation* (ed. J. Rey and J. Joosten, Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 143 – 65.

211 M. D. Nelson, '*The Syriac Version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 20.

212 N. Calduch-Benages, Joan Ferrer and Jan Liesen, *Wisdom of the Scribe: Diplomatic Edition of the Syriac Version of the Book of Ben Sira according to Codex Ambrosianus, with translations in Spanish and English* (Estella, 2003), pp. 35 – 36.

> The translation of Ben Sira is certainly the worst translation of the Syriac Bible. In many cases one cannot ascertain whether the mistakes derive from the translator, from the Hebrew Vorlage, or are due to the transmission of the Syriac text. What is certain, however, is that the translator did his job in a negligent and superficial way.[213]

The latest – and, as the editors claim, so far the most reliable – English annotated translation of the Syriac Peshitta is currently being prepared by a group of international scholars. This project is called 'The Bible of Edessa' and is based on the oldest MSS of the Syriac Bible. 'The Bible of Edessa' is a part of the Peshitta Project authorized by the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament and maintained by the Leiden Peshitta Institute.[214] Wido van Peursen and John Elwolde are the scholars working on the translation of Sirach. The approach being taken is that they will each separately translate the entire book, and then exchange their completed translations and revise each other's work. The whole Edessa Bible will be translated in this way. The first part of this project was published recently containing the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles in a separate volume. The authors are expecting to finish the whole work by 2019.

A very brief but useful narrative on the Syriac version of Sirach was written by Milward Nelson as a PhD dissertation in 1981 and published in 1988. In the second chapter of his book, Nelson gives some information about the editions of the different versions of the Syriac Sirach, from the 1645 edition of Gabriel Sionite[215] to the 1966 edition made by the Peshitta institute.[216] He also gives in chapter three all the extant MSS of Peshitta which contain Sirach, the earliest of which is the above mentioned MS from Milan and the latest of which was copied in 1818 C.E.[217] In addition to this, Nelson compares some chapters[218] of the

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213 R. Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1906), p. cxxxvii, trans. by N. Calduch-Benages, J. Ferrer and J. Liesen, '*Wisdom of the Scribe*' (Estella, 2003), p. 47.

214 Bas ter Haar Romeny, 'Choosing a Textual Basis for the New English Annotated Translation of the Syriac Bible' in *Aramaic Studies* 3, (2005), pp. 167 – 186.

215 Paris Polyglot, Vol. 8. Michel Le Jays, et al. *Biblia Hebraica, Samaritana, Chaldaica, Graeca, Syriaca, Latina, Arabica* (Paris, 1645).

216 The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version (The Peshitta Institute of the University of Leiden) 1966, Nelson says that a critical text is to be published by M. Winter at the Peshitta institute of Leiden, but this has not yet appeared.

217 M. D. Nelson, '*The Syriac Version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira*', pp. 30 – 3.

218 He compares two Syriac versions: the one found in the Mousul Bible and in Vattioni's polyglot with the Hebrew text of MS B from the Cairo Geniza, the Masada text and GI. From the title of the work one might suppose that Nelson has compared the whole Syriac Ben Sira with the above mentioned texts, but actually his comparison was limited to chapters 39:27 – 44:17, i. e. the chapters that were found in Masada. Cf. B. Wright, 'The Syriac Version of the Wisdom

Syriac Sirach with the Hebrew and Greek texts. Unfortunately he does not give his reasons for choosing certain chapters and not others, though as B. Wright suggests, it could be because the selected chapters comprise the scope of the Masada fragments.[219] One valuable comment that Nelson gives as a conclusion to his work is that the Syriac version of Sirach was translated from Hebrew before the Cairo Geniza MSS as there are many similarities between it and the fragments found in Masada.[220]

2.4.3 Greek Version of Sirach

The Greek translation of Sirach is the oldest translation of this book. It is preserved in two major forms widely known as GI and GII. The former is the earlier of the two and was made by the grandson of the author. This translation was done about seventy-five years after the original text was written. The translator warns in the Prologue to GI that what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have exactly the same sense in translation,[221] that is, to put it in Giuseppe Veltri's words, it gives merely an imprecise idea of the content of the original.[222] Even the first Greek translation is to some extent an interpretation of what was originally written in Hebrew. Many scholars are in full agreement on this. To the extent that the interpretative character of GI is not seen as a disqualifying feature of this text but rather as an original intention of the Grandson. 'Ben Sira's grandson clearly does not consider it the duty of the translator to give anything in the shape of a literal translation of his original; he seeks, rightly, to present as far as possible a well-constructed Greek interpretation rather than a slavish reproduction of what he translated'.[223] In the case of GII this approach of the Grandson is even more evident as it is based not only on the original Hebrew text but on two Hebrew texts and one Greek. Most of the textual witnesses of the Greek text of Sirach, including the second Armenian translation, are derivations from the recensed GII version of the text. Since all the discovered MSS of the orig-

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of Ben Sira Compared to the Greek and Hebrew Materials by Milward Douglas Nelson' in *JBL* Vol. 109, No. 4 (1990), pp. 720 – 21; T. H. Lim, 'Nelson's 'Syriac Version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira' in *JQR* Vol. 81, No. 1 – 2 (Jul-Oct 1990), pp. 189 – 91.

219 B. Wright, 'The Syriac Version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira Compared to the Greek and Hebrew Materials by Milward Douglas Nelson' in *JBL* Vol. 109, No. 4 (1990), pp. 720 – 21.

220 M. D. Nelson, '*The Syriac Version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 132.

221 Sir. Prologue.

222 G. Veltri, '*Libraries, Translations, and 'Canonic' Texts*', p. 191.

223 G. Box, W. Oesterley, 'Sirach' in *Apocrypha of the Old Testament Vol. 1* (*ed. R. Charles*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1913). Cf. Wright, '*No Small Difference*', pp. 20 – 1.

inal Hebrew taken together cover only two thirds of the whole text of Sirach, the Greek translation is immensely valuable. In this regard it is important to recognize the role of the Armenian translation of Sirach as a valuable source for the reconstruction of GII. As in the case of the transposed texts of Sir. 30:25 – 33:13a and Sir. 33:13b-36:16a, it can be demonstrated that the Armenian text, together with Latin and Syriac, makes much better sense than the Greek texts. All the extant Greek MSS of Sirach have this 'great displacement' which reveals the fact that all these texts have one common source. Box and Oesterley compare two types of texts, Cod. B, which is one type and Cod. 248, 253, which is a different type. They all contain various displacements and additions. But the difference between them in terms of the date is almost a thousand years and it is hard to believe that they all have one source. '...the Old Latin version represents a condition of affairs which is older than either the great uncial codices or the cursives as we now have them; this, therefore, proves that the type of text represented by Cod. 248, 253 was extant in some MSS before the existence of the archetypal MS which contained the displacement'.[224] In the Revised Version of the English text of Sirach there was an attempt to recover the original (GI) Greek version of the text and therefore all those words or phrases which were not found in the uncial Greek MSS were omitted with a note in the margin 'Verse... is omitted by the best authorities'.[225] However this does not mean that the group of cursives: 55, 70, 106, 248, 253, 254 are later versions. As Box and Oesterley argue, most probably the translation of both uncial and cursive texts goes back as early as the 1st century B.C.E.[226] Therefore, it is difficult to say with certainty which version is closest to the original Greek translation. It has also been suggested that Cod. 248 is found in Armenian as well as Syro-Hexaplaric and Old Latin translations. The strongest evidence in support of this is the lack of the great displacement of Sir. 30:25 – 33:13a and Sir. 33:13b-36:16a in many Armenian MSS. This can be determined only after an in depth textual analysis of Armenian with its parent texts.

The value of the secondary (GII) text is no less than that of the primary (GI) translation. Box and Oesterley point out the Hebrew references from Sirach in the Talmud which do not correspond to the great uncials but rather to the sec-

224 G. Box, W. Oesterley, 'Sirach' in *Apocrypha of the Old Testament Vol. 1* (*ed. R. Charles*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p. 281.

225 Revised Version With Apocrypha (1895).

226 G. Box, W. Oesterley, 'Sirach' in *Apocrypha of the Old Testament Vol. 1* (*ed. R. Charles*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p. 281.

ondary recensed GII.[227] This indicates that the later recensed Greek text was sometimes based on the original Hebrew and not on the primary Greek translation and for that reason it is sometimes closer to Hebrew. We must note here that GII as a single text is not contained in any MS but it can be reconstructed from other translations.[228] Also, surprisingly, some additions in the Cairo Geniza MSS are harmonious not with the great uncials but with the 248 group. Max Margolis provides a valuable discussion on this in his review of J. Hart's 'Ecclesiasticus'.[229] Nevertheless, it is still uncertain as to why there must have been two different Greek texts of Sirach. The existence of the additions in the secondary version is explained by Hart in the following way:

> They are fragments of the Wisdom of a Scribe of the Pharisee, and contain tentative Greek renderings of many of the technical terms and watchwords of the sect. As Jesus ben Sira dealt with the earlier Scriptures, so some unknown disciple dealt with his master's composition. He received the deposit and added to it.[230]

Recreation of the original Greek text of Sirach can be done only by taking into consideration the inter-influential character of both extant Greek texts. Either uncial or cursive groups represent texts of major revisions and if on one hand the primary family of texts (GI) gives a closer reading to the Hebrew original, on the other hand the secondary group (GII) fills the textual lapses which take place in all extant Hebrew texts of Sirach. Thus, to arrive at a solution of a particular problem related to textual analysis or intertextual comparisons, both groups of texts must be taken into consideration. At least two of the three Armenian translations are influenced by both Greek texts of Sirach. The latest translations by Oskan Erewanc'i and Step'anos Lehac'i are done from Latin and therefore have little value for textual research. However, the later recensions of the P'owt'anaki (a hurried translation from Syriac in 413 C.E.) and Ynkalyal (taken from the LXX) versions have a great deal of connection with the two Greek texts.

227 G. Box, W. Oesterley, 'Sirach' in *Apocrypha of the Old Testament Vol. 1* (*ed. R. Charles*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p. 281.
228 Wright, '*No Small Difference*', p. 4.
229 M. L. Margolis, 'Mr. Hart's Ecclesiasticus', Review of Ecclesiasticus. The Greek Text of Codex 248 by J. H. A. Hart in *JQR Vol. 1, No 3* (Pennsylvania University Press, 1911), pp. 403 – 18.
230 J. H. A. Hart, *Ecclesiasticus: The Greek Text of Codex 248, Edited with Textual Commentary and Prolegomena* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), p. 274.

2.5 List of all the Extant Armenian Manuscripts, Complete and in Fragments, which Contain Sirach

In Bibles

1. MM. N. 5979 (15th c.) pp. 182r-201v (1:1 – 16:7)
2. MM. N. 345 (1270, Cilicia, scribes: Barseł Episkopos, Yôvhannês Arkʻayeł-bayr) pp. 475v-486r
3. MM. N. 181 (1295, Mleh's Monastery, scribe: Yôvhannês Kʻahanay) pp. 1r -1v
4. MM. N. 177 (13th c., Cilicia, scribe: Movsês) pp. 347r-355r
5. MM. N. 353 (1317, Glajor, scribes: Kirakos Rabowni, Yôvhannês Sarkawag) 366r-375v
6. MM. N. 183 (1308, The desert of Lowsaworičʻ) pp. 127r-141v
7. MM. N. 5608 (1363 Jerusalem, scribes: Awetis Sarkawag and Kirakos) pp. 102r-147v
8. MM. N. 352 (1367 – 1371, Sowłta-Sarłowt, scribe: Grigor Toroseancʻ) pp. 191r-196r
9. MM. N. 346 (1390, 1400, Hizan, scribes: Petros Abeła, Yôvhannês Kʻahanay and Melkʻisedekʻ), pp. 322v-329r
10. MM. N. 230 (14th c.) pp. 99r-144r
11. MM. N. 354 (14th c., Aparanner, scribes: Grigor, Łowkas) pp. 347r-356r
12. MM. N. 6569 (14th c.) pp. 461v-469r
13. MM. N. 7141 (14th c.) pp. 216r-246b (1:1 – 34:14)
14. MM. N.143 (15th c.) pp. 191r-196r (23:37 – 42:25)
15. MM. N. 184 (1400 – 1401) pp. 164v-170v
16. MM. N. 232 (15th c.) pp. 205r-275v
17. MM. No. 6640 (17th c.) pp. 68v-74v (1:1 – 4:6, 9:25 – 23:36)
18. MM. N. 2585 (16th c.) pp. 269v-275v
19. MM. N. 4114 (1608 – 1610) pp. 453v-463v
20. MM. N. 186 (1611) pp. 384r-390v (Contains also a passage about the book and a list of some key themes of it)
21. MM. N. 351 (1616 – 1619) pp. 337v-344r
22. MM. N. 146 (1627, Hizan, scribe: Mesrop Dpir), pp. 369r-399r (Contains also a passage about the book and a list of some key themes of it)
23. MM. N. 187 (1640, Tigranakert, scribe: Ełiazar) pp. 252r-258r
24. MM. N. 2397 (1640, Etchmiadzin, scribe: Movsês) pp. 270r-326v
25. MM. N. 188 (1641 – 1643, Constantinople, scribe: Yakob dpir Aknecʻi) pp. 286v-293r
26. MM. N. 2669 (1641, Constantinople, scribe: Astowacatowr Dpir) pp. 413v-422v
27. MM. N. 2587 (1448, Isfahan, scribes: Hayrapet and Astowacatowr) pp. 363v-371r

28. MM. N. 189 (1649–1650, New Julfa, scribes: Gaspar Erecʻ, Yovsepʻ Dpir and Yarowtʻiwn) pp. 352v-360r
29. MM. N. 202 (before 1651, Constantinople-Tigranakert, scribe: Stepʻanos Dpir)
30. MM. N. 348 (1654–1661, Constantinople, scribe: Tʻamowr Dpir Aknecʻi) pp. 328r-336r
31. MM. N. 200 (1653–1658, New Julfa, scribe: Yôvhannês Dpir) pp. 358v-366r
32. MM. N. 7623 (1655, Kafa, scribe: Nikołayos Melanawor) pp. 591v-598v
33. MM. N. 374 (1657, New Julfa, scribe: Grigor Hamazpencʻ) pp. 349v-356v
34. MM. N. 201 (1660, Isfahan, scribe: Astowacatowr Kʻahanay) pp. 337r-345v
35. MM. N. 191 (1663, Isfahan, scribe: Gaspar Erecʻ) pp. 347r-354v
36. MM. N. 203 (1666, scribe: Tiratowr Dpir) pp. 304r-309v
37. MM. N. 6281 (1667, New Julfa, scribe: Kirakos Kʻahanay) pp. 299r-306r
38. MM. N. 349 (1686, Constantinople, Etchmiadzin, scribes: Nahapet Vardapet, Małakia Kostandnowpolsecʻi) pp. 337r-345r (This manuscript also contains another version of Sirach by Stepʻanos Lehacʻi, pp. 634r-652r)
39. MM. N. 204 (17th c., New Julfa, scribes: Gaspar Erecʻ, Harowtʻiwn Dpir, Sargis Vanecʻi) pp. 354r-361r
40. MM. N. 205 (17th c., scribe: Yôvhannês Erekʻ, Mattʻeos) pp. 43v-50v
41. MM. N. 2732 (17th c., scribe: Astowacatowr) pp. 308v-315v
42. MM. N. 3705 (17th c.) pp. 424r-4432r
43. Jer.SJ N. 297 (1503, Xlatʻ, scribe: Karapet Kʻahanay) pp. 305v-313v
44. Jer.SJ N. 3043 (1606–1622, Egypt, Jerusalem, scribe: Grigor Vardapet) p. 238r-245r
45. Jer.SJ N. 2558 (1615, Mokkʻ, scribe: Zakʻaria) pp. 369v-381r
46. Jer.SJ N. 2560 (1624, Hizan, scribe: Kirakos Erecʻ) pp. 323r-332r
47. Jer.SJ N. 1127 (1635, Tigranakert, scribe: Safar Dpir) pp. 401v-411v (Contains also a list of the chapters of the book)
48. Jer.SJ N. 3438 (1636–1639, Sebastia, scribe: Barałam Sebastacʻi) pp. 333r-340v
49. Jer.SJ N. 1938 (1640, Constantinople, scribe: Mikʻayel) pp. 438r-444v
50. Jer.SJ N. 1934 (1642–2646, Isfahan, scribe: Stepʻanos) pp. 496v-506v
51. Jer.SJ N. 1933 (1645, Isfahan, scribe: Astowacatowr Dpir) pp. 327r-333v
52. Jer.SJ N. 1927 (1649, Byzantium, scribe: Astowacatowr Dpir) pp. 293v-299r
53. Jer.SJ N. 542 (1656, Bethlehem, scribe: Zakʻaria) pp. 356r-364v
54. Jer.SJ N. 2561 (1670, Constantinople, scribes: Meliton Erecʻ, Ełia and Azaria) pp. 372v-381v
55. Jer.SJ N. 1928 (17th c. Isfahan, scribe: Markos Sarkawag) pp. 346r-352v
56. Jer.SJ N. 2557 (17th c. Hizan) pp. 295r-304r
57. Jer.SJ N. 501 (17th c.) pp. 564r-572r
58. Jer.SJ N. 742 (17th c.) pp. 119v-149v

59. NJ. Amenaprkich N. 23 (1361, Marała, scribe: Mkrtič' K'ahana) pp. 263v-269v
60. NJ. Amenaprkich, N. 2 (before 1642, NJ., scribe: Yezekiel) pp. 610r-623r
61. NJ. Amenaprkich, N. 1 (1662, New Julfa, scribes: Markos, Yovsêp, Yôvhannês, Yakob) pp. 339v-347v
62. VeM, N. 9 (14th C, scribe: Yezekiel Sarkawag) pp. 385v-393r
63. VeM, N. 13 (1635, scribes: Yakob and Yôvhannês) pp. 346v-354v
64. VeM, N. 14 (1652–1653, scribes: Alek'siane, Abraham Erec', Astowacatowr) pp. 481r-505v
65. VeM, N. 3 (1648, Persia, scribes: Gaspar Erec' and Yôvhannês) pp. 369v-377v
66. VeM, N. 4 (1655, Lvov, scribe: Markos Sarkawag) pp. 355v-363r
67. VeM, N. 16 (1690–1699, scribe: Sowk'ias sarkawag) pp. 64r-77r
68. VeM, Kyurtian Collection, N. 37 (1638, scribe: Yakob Sarkawag) pp. 257v-264v
69. ViM, Library Collection, N. 71 (13th or 14th c.) pp. 334r-341r
70. ViM, Library Collection, N. 55 (1368–1375, Ani, Bjni, scribe: Yôvhannês Episkopos) pp. 357v-365r
71. ViM, Library Collection, N. 11 (before 1608, Sechov, Abraham K'ahanay) pp. 404r-413r
72. Vatican, Armenian Collection, N. 1 (before 1625, Constantinople, scribe: Mik'ayel Toxatec'i) pp. 357r-362v
73. Yôvhannês T. Aramian's Private Collection in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (1661, scribe: Harowt'iwn and Yôvhannês) pp. 344r-351r
74. British Library, London N. 14101 (1661, Isfahan) pp. 344r-351r
75. British Museum, London, N. 8833 (17th c., scribe: Mahtesi Łazar and P'ilippos) pp. 45r-52v
76. Bodleian Library, N. D 14 (17th c. scribe: Sargis) pp. 286r-295r
77. Paul Getty Museum 83 MA, USA 63, I 14 (1636, Isfahan, scribe: Barałam) pp. 313r-320r

In Charyntirs (Book of Homilies)

1. MM. N. 1500 (13th c., Ayrivank', scribe: Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i) pp. 363r-369v
2. Jer.SJ N. 585 (no information in the colophon) pp. 398r-403r
3. Jer.SJ N. 840 (1609, Garasar, scribe: Grigor k'ahana) pp. 514r-547r

In Miscellanies

4. MM. N. 6058 (13th c., scribe: Tła Paron) 66r-103v (1:1–39:13)
5. MM. N. 2961 (1321, scribe: Mxit'ar Anec'i) 2r-39v
6. MM. N. 5673 (14th c.) pp. 1r-47v
7. MM. N. 9874 (15th c.) pp. 232r-284v

8. MM. N. 8106 (1595) pp. 150r-173v
9. MM. N. 2018 (1621, Lviv, Istanbul, scribe: Sahak Sebastacʻi) pp. 207r-229v
10. MM. N. 7247 (1624, scribe: Abraham) pp. 1r-6v (1:1 – 6:25)
11. MM. N. 2147 (1627, scribe: Minas) pp. 153r-193v
12. MM. N. 1465 (1628, scribe: Nazar) pp. 30r-62r
13. MM. N. 79 (1630, scribe: Sargis Sarkawag) pp. 176r-231v
14. MM. N. 75 (1631, scribe: Vagharshapat) pp. 203r-249r
15. MM. N. 74 (1647, scribe: Mankasar) pp. 192r-254v
16. MM. N. 80 (17th c. [before 1648], scribe: Towma) pp. 30r-67r
17. MM. N. 1390 (1666, New Julfa, scribe: Yôvhannês) pp. 254v-276r (Contains also a list of one-line descriptions of chapters)
18. MM. N. 8699 (1671) pp. 11v-29r
19. MM. N. 3769 (1684, 1695, Kutahia, scribes: Harowtʻiwn Kʻahanay, Awetis Erewancʻi) pp. 196r-220v (Contains also a passage by Stepʻanos Lehacʻi about Sirach and a list of some key themes of it)
20. MM. N. 9100 (1686, scribe: Markos Erecʻ) pp. 170v-178r
21. MM. N. 2113 (1691, scribe: Mikʻayel) pp. 271r-298v
22. MM. N. 2909 (1696, scribe: Srapion Vardapet) pp. 18r-37v (Contains also a passage by Stepʻanos Lehacʻi about Sirach and a list of some key themes of it)
23. MM. N. 3478 (1698 – 1699, Ernǰak, scribe: Esayi) pp. 82v-86v
24. MM. N. 1887 (17th c., scribe: Nazareth) pp. 343r-366r
25. MM. N. 1887 (17th c., scribe: Nazareth Amirasatʻencʻ) pp. 343r-366r
26. MM. N. 3276 (17th c.) pp. 62r-63r
27. MM. N. 3823 (17th c., scribe: Yôvhannês Erecʻ) pp. 69r-84v
28. MM. N. 3963 (17th c.) pp. 84r-86r
29. MM. N. 5621 (17th c.) pp. 91r-154r
30. MM. N. 5935 (17th c.) pp. 26v-41v
31. MM. N. 6712 (17th c.) pp. 100v-112v
32. MM. N. 34 (18th c.) pp. 356r-356v
33. MM. N. 3260 (17th c. scribe: Markos) pp. 126v-188r
34. MM. N. 3290 (18th c.) pp. 1v-39v (Contains also a passage by Stepʻanos Lehacʻi about Sirach)
35. MM. N. 705 (1668, Agoulis) pp. 1r-158v (Contains also a passage about the book by Stepʻanos Lehacʻi and a list of some key themes of it) 1r-158v
36. Jer.SJ N. 714 (date unknown, scribe: Esayi Vardapet) pp. 386r-407v
37. Jer.SJ N. 723 (1698, Constantinople, scribe: Grigor) pp. 59r-83r
38. Jer.SJ N. 743 (1618, Lvov, scribe: Asar Sebastacʻi) pp. 63r-70v
39. Jer.SJ N. 1119 (1594, Leopolis, scribe: Artʻown) pp. 90v-120v
40. Jer.SJ N. 1652 (1631, Lim island, scribe: Movsês Kʻahanay) pp. 443r-505r

41. Jer.SJ N. 1656 (1634) pp. 101r-167v, 242r
42. ViM, N. 976 (1613 – 1623) pp. 1v-15v
43. ViM, N. 1169 (19th c.) pp. 3r-70v

In Bible Fragments

1. MM. N. 5571 (1657 – 1659, Smyrna, scribe: Petros) pp. 164v-184v
2. MM. N. 9582 (1661, Veringet, scribe: Parsam) pp. 153r-211v
3. MM. N. 7093 (1664, scribe: Yovsêp Abełay), pp. 136v-180r
4. MM. N. 81 (17th c.) pp. 294r-256r (Contains also a passage by Stepʻanos Lehacʻi about Sirach and a list of some key themes of it)
5. MM. N. 271 (17th c.) pp. 208v-270r (starts from 1:4)
6. MM. N. 3514 (17th c., scribe: Pʻanos) pp. 111r-144v
7. MM. N. 6753 (17th c.) pp. 138r-165v
8. MM. N. 10238 (17th c.) pp. 241r-304v
9. MM. N. 34 (18th C) pp. 356r-356v
10. Jer.SJ N. 397 (1596, Hizan, scribes: Mattʻeos and Grigoris Vardapets, Sargis Kʻahanay) pp. 241r-250r
11. Jer.SJ N. 711 (1619, scribe: Yôvhannês Erznkacʻi) pp. 93r-119v
12. Jer.SJ N. 1090 (1638, Šoš, scribe: Łazar Episkopos) pp. 143r-165v
13. Jer.SJ N. 1209 (1659, Hermon Monastery, scribe: Astowacatowr) pp. 543r-554v
14. Jer.SJ N. 1526 (17th c., Jersalem) pp. 199r-209r
15. NJ. Amenaprkich, N. 8 (1627, NJ., scribe: Yakob Erecʻ) pp. 49r-55r
16. NJ Amenaprkič, N. 10 (1641, NJ., Šoš, scribe: Anton Dpir) pp. 275v-296r
17. comma N. 22 (1201, Hromkla, scribe: Basil Sarkawag) pp. 183r-227v
18. comma N. 23 (13th c., scribe: Sahak Kʻahanay Asori) pp. 194r-249v
19. comma N. 24 (17th c.) pp. 162r-198v
20. comma N. 15 (1710, Julfa, scribe: Yakob) pp. 61r-79v
21. comma Kyurtian Collection, N. 41 (1588) p. 22r (Contains only a short passage about the book).

2.6 Printed Editions of the Armenian Bible

There have been several editions of the Bible in Grabar: Oskanean, Zôhrapean, Bagratowni, and a revision of Oskanean. All of them had several reprintings: the Oskanean version was published in 1666 in Amsterdam, and was reprinted in 1705 in Constantinople and 1733 in Venice with slight editions by Mxitʻar Sebastacʻi. The Zôhrapean version was first published in 1805 in Venice. In 1817 a reprint of the 1733 Sebastacʻi edition was published in St. Petersburg. The same ed-

ition was printed in Serampore in the same year. The next critical edition was made and published by Arsên Bagratowni in 1860 in Venice. In 1892, the American Bible Society published a new edition containing just the Torah in Constantinople. In 1895 the same Society published the whole edition of Bagratowni's Bible. In 1929, the Vienna Mechitarist fathers reprinted the 1895 edition and finally in 1997 the Bible Society of Armenia reprinted the 1929 Vienna edition.

Although separate parts of the Bible had been printed since 1512, the first almost complete printed Bible, consisting of 47 books in total, was the one printed in 1666 in Amsterdam by Oskan Erewanc'i. It was dramatically influenced by the Latin Vulgate, to the extent that in the first part of it Oskan translated and included introductions by Jerome to the books of the Bible. The second part of the book, which includes the Book of Sirach placed between the Wisdom of Solomon and Isaiah, has 834 pages. Apart from the canonical and deuterocanonical books Oskan translated and included here the Prayer of Manasseh and IV Ezra as well. In the Bodleian Library in Oxford there is a copy of this 1666 Bible in which the second part has only 808 pages instead of 834. Knowing that there would be accusations in Armenia that he was making a pro-Latin translation, Oskan took out the above mentioned Prayer of Manasseh and IV Ezra, secretly printed a new edition, and sent the copies to Armenia.[231] Later publishers like Yôvhannês Zôhrapean or Arsên Bagratowni did not use this as a source since they considered it 'Latin', and after being reprinted in the 1705 and 1733 editions it soon went out of circulation.

Not long after Oskan's edition, Step'anos Lehac'i produced his own translation, again greatly influenced by the Latin Vulgate. Despite the fact that several authors consider Lehac'i's translation as a published edition,[232] it has never in fact been published and is preserved only in several MSS.[233]

The founder of the Catholic Armenian Mechitarist congregation, Mxit'ar Sebastac'i, attempted to make a new revised edition based on the Oskan edition in 1733, but it did not find popularity either, for the same reason as with Oskan's edition.

The breakthrough in Armenian biblical scholarship of the 19th century was the new edition made by a monk from the same Mechitarist congregation, Fr. Yôvhannês Zôhrapean. The unique point in his edition is that Zôhrapean for

231 Cf. V. Nersessian, *The Bible in the Armenian tradition* (USA: Los Angeles, 2001), pp. 32 – 34.
232 Հ. Ածառյան, Հայերէն Արմատական Բառարան [H. Ač'aryan, *Hayeren Armatakan Bařaran* [Dictionary of the Root Words of Armenian] (Yerevan, 1942), p. 677].
233 Cf. Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan norahayt hatvacner' in *Etchmiadzin No. 11 – 12*, (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60 – 70].

the first time used MSS dating from 1295 – 1655, which had been translated entirely according to the Armenian biblical tradition. The only problem with Zôhrapean's edition is that it does not mention which part of his edition was taken from which manuscript. However, in the preface to his Bible, Zôhrapean claims that some of the MSS he used are exact copies of MSS from as far back as the 5th century C.E.[234] Arsên Bagratowni in 1833 published another separate volume containing the Book of Sirach and the Letter of Jeremiah to the Captives in Babylon.[235] The same book was reprinted in 1878; however, there is no mention of this book neither in Zarbhanalean's nor in Łazikian's bibliographies. In the introduction to this book Bagratowni touches upon the history of the Armenian translation of Sirach and says that the earliest manuscript containing Sirach that he used in order to produce his volume is dated to 1418.[236] As we have already concluded, however, it is impossible that the earliest Armenian text of Sirach was made after the 10th century: we do not need any other evidence apart from the 5th century Armenian translation of the homilies of St. John Chrysostom, as well as Movsês Xorenac'i's witness, to be sure that St. Mesrop and his disciples undertook the translation of Ben-Sira during the same period that the other Biblical Wisdom literature was translated. Zôhrapean's edition was published both in one and then in four volumes. In both of these publications Sirach is placed at the end of the book, after the New Testament. Zôhrapean also included in his edition I Ezra (the Greek book of Ezra), Judith, Tobit, the first three books of the Maccabees (IV Maccabees does not exist in Armenian), the Wisdom of Solomon and the Book of Baruch.

When we compare the text of Sirach in Zôhrapean with the text of a half a century later published by Bagratowni, we see a large number of redactions or alterations applied to Zôhrapean. It is rather difficult to define the actual reason for these changes to the Zôhrapean text. Two reasons that may have influenced this text are: first, the Syriac parent text contained a shorter version than the later Greek text and when the recension was done in the second quarter of the 5th century, the text of Sirach was left unchanged. Another reason is the widespread use of Sirach for teaching purposes and the consequent production of many separate MSS of this book. Teachers in the early Armenian schools

234 Աստուածաշնունչ մատեան Հին եւ Նոր կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownč' matean Hin ew Nor ktakaranac', Vol. 1* (ed. A. Bagratowni, Venice, 1805), pp. 10 – 11].

235 Ա. Բագրատունի, Իմաստութիւն Յեսուայ որդւոյ Սիրաքայ և թուղթ Երեմիայ Մարգարէի առ գերեալսն ի Բաբիլոն [A. Bagratowni, *'Imastowtiwn Yesoway ordwoy Sirakay ew tułt Eremiay Margarêi ar gerealsn i Babilon,* (Venice, 1833, reprinted 1878)].

236 Ա. Բաբրատունի, Իմաստութիւն Յեսուայ որդւոյ Սիրաքայ [A. Bagratowni, *'Imastowtiwn Yesoway ordwoy Sirakay'*, pp. 9 – 10].

would make their own amendments into the book (mostly by means of marginal annotations rather than alterations to the body of the text) which would then be added into the text by later copyists. This is how some passages which are not found in any of the other translations, e.g. Sir. 16:19, 31:16 etc. might have found their way first into Zôhrapean and consequently into Bagratowni. Regardless of the fact that Zôhrapean's edition of Sirach has plenty of omissions and abbreviations, it still does have some verses which are not found in the Bagratowni text. Those verses are: Sir. 8:1–22; 11:15–16; 13:11, 22, 24; 17:15; 37:9–34; 42:26; 43:9–36. However, this is not certainly the case for Sir. 28:10. Claude Cox points to the Arm. version of Sir. 28:10 (14 in Zôh.) 'Եթէ փչես ի կայծակն' բորբոքի նա...' (If you blow upon the embers, it will burn) and says that it is a free rendering of Greek 'κατὰ τὴν ὕλην τοῦ πυρὸς οὕτως ἐκκαυθήσεται' (In proportion to the fuel, so will the fire burn). However this is not accurate; rather v. 28:10 is simply missing from Zôh. text. The line that Cox discusses is not a free rendering of the Greek Verse he identifies, but a rather close translation of 28:12 in LXX 'ἐὰν φυσήσῃς εἰς σπινθῆρα, ἐκκαήσεται...'. This line is extant only in the Bag. text, 'Ըստ նիւթոյ հրոյն' այնպէս վառեսցի' [Əst niwtoy hroyn' aynpês vaṙesc̣i] under v. 28:12.[237]

The next very important edition belongs to Arsên Bagratowni who was again from the Mechitarist congregation in Venice. In this edition Sirach is not separated from the rest of the canon but is among the Wisdom books and has 42 chapters. Bagratowni's edition is a valuable source for the examination of different books of the Armenian bible. Unfortunately the text of Sirach in this edition is not based on a comparison of the Hebrew and Greek texts, simply because the Hebrew text of Cairo Geniza or Masada had not yet been discovered. Bagratowni himself, as a footnote to the first chapter, says 'There is no complete and flawless copy of this book among our manuscripts. They do not have the same completeness as the Greek original: there are many omissions especially at the end of the book. We found this copy as one made according to the tradition of the ancestors and so we publish it amongst the God-inspired 'Աստուածաշունչ' books, until time brings a new more complete version without all these omissions'.[238]

There are some chapters though which are very similar in style and in translation between Bagratowni and Zôhrapean. For example the verses 1:18 and 18:30–20:28. The latter section, which is identical in the both texts, ends with the following words:

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237 C. E. Cox, *Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion in Armenia* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), p.77.

238 Գիրք Աստուածաշունչ Հին եւ Նոր Գտակարանաց [*Girk' Astowacašownč' Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'* (ed. A. Bagratowni, Venice, 1860), p. 86].

> Անարգանք անձին մարդոյ՝ բանք սրտի իւրոյ եւ ամօթ նորին կանխեսցէ ի նոյն: Որդեակ, պահեա զբանս իմ, եւ խելամուտ լեր ի դմա ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի. Զի եւ որդի հարազատ եւ ժառանգ մեծազգի՛որ զնախնեացն մեծանձնութիւն ոչ նորոգէ եւ յառաջ բերէ յամօթ մեծ եւ ի նախատինս ի նա հաւուց իւրոց, եւ անէծք նորոգ.[239]
>
> Anarganǩ anjin mardoy՝ banǩ srti iwroy ew amôt norin kanxesćê i noyn: Ordeak, pahea zbans im, ew xelamowt ler i dma i towê ew i gišeri. Zi ew ordi harazat ew žařang mecazgi՝or znaxneaćn mecanjnowtiwn oč՝ norogê ew yařaǰ berê yamôt mec ew i naxatns i na hawowċ iwroċ, ew anêcǩ norog
>
> The dishonour of a person is the words of his heart, and his disgrace outruns him. My child, keep my words and ponder on them day and night, for even one's own son, heir of a noble family, if he does not renew and develop his ancestors' honour, then he becomes a shame and reproach for his fathers and a new curse).

Interestingly, in verse 20:27, only a verse before 20:28, the text significantly differs in both texts. First, instead of the short genitive 'երկոքին' [erkoǩin] (both) in Zôhrapean, Bagratowni has 'երկոքեան'. Also, the verb 'ժառանագեմ' [žařanagem] (to inherit) is in the future tense in Zôhrapean while it appears in the present tense in Bagratowni. However, without doubt we can confirm that Bagratowni copied this passage from Zôhrapean. It is known that Bagratowni's edition is heavily influenced by the Greek text and almost everywhere corresponds to the latter. We also know that Zôhrapean has many alterations and additions in his text which are definitely not influenced by Greek. The features which are most peculiar to Zôhrapean's style confirm that Bagratowni used in some places Zôhrapean's text. A vivid testimony to this is the use by Bagratowni of passages unique for the Armenian text, which are found in the Zôhrapean text as well. There are no other amendments in Bagratowni apart from those found in the Zôhrapean text. Many of the above mentioned features of the Zôhrapean text are shown in the chart (2.10) where I compared some chapters of the Armenian texts with Greek.

Since its publication in 1860 the Bagratowni Bible has become so popular that it became the first classical edition to be officially translated into Modern Armenian by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and published by the Bible Society of Armenia in 1994.[240]

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239 Sir. 20:28 both in Zôhrapean and Bagratowni.

240 Աստուածաշնունչ մատեան Հին եւ Նոր կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownč՝ matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranneri, Arewelahayeren nor t՝argmanowt՝iwn*][Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, A New Eastern Armenian Translation] (MSHE and BSA, Yerevan, 1994). This edition was reprinted in 1999 and 2001 in honour of the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of Christianity as state religion in Armenia.

2.7 The Newly Found Chapters of Sirach in Jerusalem and Yerevan

Jerusalem

It was in 1927 when Ełišê Dowrean was informed by Frederick Mourat (an Armenian scholar based in Jaffa) that there were chapters of the Book of Sirach unknown to modern scholarship in one of the manuscripts at the Jerusalem Armenian Depository. This manuscript contained a Bible copied by Zak'aria Mokac'i for the abbot of the Varag monastery, Archimandrite Martiros, in 1615. Frederick Mourat was himself informed about this manuscript by the Armenian Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahak. Soon Abp. Ełišê identified those chapters (42–46) in the manuscript and published them in '*Sion*' journal in 1927.[241] Some of these chapters however are not complete but are just short passages: e. g. there is only one additional verse (25b) of chapter 42 and the first six verses of chapter 46.

The poor condition of the MS as well as the quality of the actual copy were major obstacles for Ełišê Dowrean over the course of his research. However, he managed not only to recover the lost fragments of the MS but also to identify some corruptions, consequently correcting them in accordance with the LXX. For instance, in 43:6 'Եւ լուսինն յամենայնի ի ժամանակի իւրում, ցասումն ժամանակաց եւ նշան յաւիտենից' [Ew lowsinn yamenayni i žamanaki iwrowm, c̣asowmn žamanakac̣ ew nšan yawitenic̣] (And the moon among all others at its time, *the wrath* of the times and sign of eternity). Verse 6b starts with the word 'ցասումն' (the wrath) and therefore it does not make sense within the context of the verse. In reality this word should have been 'ցուցումն' (mark), 'And the moon among all others at its time, [marks] ~~the wrath of~~ the times and [is a] sign of eternity. This change of the initial stem 'ցուց' [c̣owc̣] to 'ցաս' [c̣as] is considered to be later alteration.

Overall textual analysis of the Jerusalem text shows that the original MS which contained this text was indeed written in the 5th century but not earlier than the last quarter of the century. For more on this subject see 'Dating the first translation of the Book of Sirach' (2.2).

241 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirak̆ay grk̆in hin t̆argmanowt̆enên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), p. 246].

Yerevan

The valuable MS N. 5608 was discovered by Gevorg Abgaryan while looking for other texts of wisdom literature in the MSS of Matenadaran. The first two parts of the MS which contain the books of Genesis and Exodus were copied by Deacon Avetikʻ by the order of Archimandrite Yakob. The time and the place of copying is not determined. The other eleven parts of the MS which include Sirach were copied in 1363 in Jerusalem by a copyist named Kirakos and by order of Nersês. These eleven volumes of the MS contain the prophecy of the Twelve Minor Prophets,[242] the Death of the Twelve Prophets, the Prophecy of Daniel, the Death of the Prophet Daniel and the Wisdom of Sirach. The entire MS has 149 paper sheets which have several colophons written in different centuries. The colophon written by the copyist of Sirach says:

> Գրեցաւ գիրքս ի մայրաքաղաքս յԵրուսաղեմ ընդ հովանեաւ Սուրբ Փրկչիս եւ այլ բազմահաւաք սուրբ տնօրինականացս. ձեռամբ մեղապարտս և փցուն գրչի Կիրակոսի, ի յիշատակ հոգւոյ սուրբ հորս մերոյ և առաջնորդի սուրբ ուխտիս... գրեցաւ ի թուին Հայոց ՊԺԲ, մարտ ԻԴ, եւ Քրիստոսի փառք յաւիտեանս, ամէն.
>
> Greċaw girǩs i mayraǩałaǩs yErowsałem ənd hovaneaw Sowrb P̛rkč̛is ew ayl bazmahawaǩ sowrb tnôrinakanaċs. jeŗamb mełapart ew p̣ċown grč̛i Kirakosi, i yišatak hogwoy sowrb hors meroy ew aŗaǰnordi sowrb owxtis... greċaw i ťowin Hayoċ PŽB, mart ID, ew K̛ristosi p̣aŗǩ yawiteans, amên
>
> This book was written in the capital city Jerusalem under the patronage of the Holy Saviour and many other holy protectors, by the hand of the sinful and villain copyist Kirakos, in memory of the soul of our holy father Nersês, the leader of this holy order... was written in the Armenian year of 812, March 24, and to Christ be glory, for ever, Amen).

The Book of Sirach is on pp. 102v-147v. It was hard to identify the text because of the absence of a title on the front page, and the lack of versification was another obstacle in defining which exact parts of Sirach are in this MS. Nevertheless, Abgaryan has added versification in accordance with the Jerusalem text and has demonstrated that the pure language (i.e. exempt of Hellenistic style words) is a testimony to the fact that this text is a copy of the 5th century translation of Mesrop and his disciples. The only passage in which the language and style do not match with the rest of the text is Sir. 18:30 – 20:26. In many instances this passage is corrupted, thus displaying its later date. It may be that later copyists have noticed the absence of these two chapters in some ancient copies and

242 Unlike Zôhrapean's edition where the lists of the chapters for the twelve prophets are placed altogether before the prophecy of Hosea, this MS has separate lists before each book of the minor prophets.

consequently added those chapters with no mention of this disparity in the text. When we compare the text of these chapters with the Greek originals we see that it differs significantly from these as well. G. Abgaryan has noticed that the above mentioned passage is literally copied by H. Zôhrapean in his 1805 edition of the Bible[243] which means that the MS that Zôhrapean used for his edition had the same addition as is found in MM. 5608. It may thus be contended that this passage was lost in the 5th century copies and the text that we have both in the Yer. and Zôh. text are not part of the original translation.

2.8 Misplaced Chapters

(30:25 – 33:13a and 33:13b-36:16a)

In most of the Greek texts of Sirach, the two passages from 30:25 – 33:13a and 33:13b-36:16a are transposed. In Bagratowni's text 33:16 – 33 is taken from the place where it should be and is added to chapter 30, i.e. the chapter starts with 30:1, carries on until 26 and then starts again from 16, finishing the passage with verse 30:33 'Եթէ չարչարեսցես զնա, եւ սարտուցեալ փախնուցու, յորո՞ւմ ճանապարհի խնդրեսցես զնա' [Ėtê č'arč'aresċes zna, ew sartowċeal ṗaxnowċow, yoro՞wm čanaparhi xndresċes zna] (If you ill-treat him, and he leaves you and runs away, which way will you go to seek him?). Henry Swete, following the theory of Otto Fritzsche, proposes that the leaves were out of order in the Greek MSS from which the majority of copies and translations were produced.[244] But the Syriac version which was translated not from Greek but from Hebrew has preserved the original order of the chapters. And because the first Armenian version of Sirach was translated from Syriac (probably also making use of the Hebrew) it has also kept the same order as in the Syriac and Hebrew. As Di Lella says, in regard to this jumbled order of the chapters,

> The two Armenian translations likewise preserve the original order. The first Armenian version seems to follow Greek and sometimes the Syriac; the second one was made clearly from Greek, but preserves some elements of the first translation. This being the case, the

243 Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan norahayt hatvacner' in *Etchmiadzin No. 11 – 12,* (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60 – 70].

244 *The Old Testament in Greek, 2* (3rd ed., Cambridge, 1907), pp. vi-vii. Cf. O. Fritzsche, *Libri apocryphi Veteris Testamenti Graece* (Leipzig, 1871).

> original order of chapters on the Armenian versions is probably to be accounted for on the basis of the influence of Syriac which, ... has the proper order.[245]

It is not easy to find out which chapter of this passage in the Armenian translations corresponds to which chapter in the Greek or Syriac texts. They even differ from each other in length and sometimes even in the meaning of some verses. In order to show the precise places of these chapters within the Armenian texts, I have laid out below Oskan's text which has the Latin enumeration in the first column, and the Zôhrapean and Bagratowni texts alongside Oskan's.

Oskan	Zôhrapean	Bagratowni
1. 31:1 – 42	1. 31:1 – 42	1. 34:1 – 42
2. 32:1 – 28	2. 32:1 – 4	2. 35:1 – 24
3. 33:1 – 33	3. 33:4 – 15; 16 – 31	3. 30:16 – 33
4. 34:1:31	4. 34:5 – 31	4. 31:1 – 31
5. 35:1 – 26	5. 35:1 – 26	5. 32:1 – 26
6. 36:1 – 28	6. 36:1 – 13	6. 33:1 – 13
7. 37:1 – 34	7. 37:7 – 34	7.—

From this comparison one can see how different the ordering of the material is in the Zôhrapean and Bagratowni texts. Zôhrapean, although omitting some verses and even chapters, is fairly loyal to the order found in Old Latin and Syriac translations, whilst Bagratowni starts this passage not from 31:1, as one would expect, but from 34:1. The order of these chapters in Zôhrapean is: 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 31, 32, 33, 37..., and in Bagratowni: 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38 (chs. 36 – 37 are omitted).

Here I disagree with Norayr Połarean who thinks that the right order of these passages found in the Armenian translations is a result of being reordered according to the Greek text of Cod. 248.[246] First, there is not any explicit evidence of influence from Cod. 248 to support Połarean's hypothesis. Second, even if they were reordered according to Cod. 248[247], this does not explain how Bagratowni has these chapters in two totally different places, i. e. starts with chapter 34, 35 and then goes back and starts from 30:16 (corresponds to 33:30:16) as ex-

245 A. Di Lella, *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical and Historical Study* (London: Mouton and Co, 1966), pp. 50 – 51.

246 Ծովական, Սիրաքայ հին հայ թարգմանութիւնները [Covakan, 'Sirak'ay hin hay t'argmanowt'iwnnerə' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 150 – 3].

247 Cursive 248 is a 14th c. MS which preserves the right order of these chapters, unlike all other Greek MSS which are considered to be derived from a single MS with the two passages misplaced. Cf. J. H. A. Hart, *Ecclesiasticus: The Greek Text of Codex 248* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909).

plained above. Cod. 248 itself very closely, in some cases even in syntax, resembles the Hebrew and Syriac texts of Sirach.[248] For example, in Sir. 11:17b Cod. 248 reads, 'εὐοδοῖ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα' instead of 'εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα εὐοδωθήσεται' in LXX. The Hebrew text has the verb in the same place 'יצלח לעד', and the same order is followed in Syriac and Armenian. Zôhrapean omits 17b and Bargratuni has 'Եւ հաճութիւն նորա՝ յաւիտեան' [Ew hačowtiwn nora՝ yawitean] (And his favour for ever).

Taking into consideration the reluctance of later Armenian editors of the Bible and of Sirach in particular, to make any changes to the original text, we can conclude that in many cases the order of chapters in the Armenian text is due to the influence of the early Syriac translation. No doubt, many amendments were made to the text after the Caesarean text was brought to Armenia; however, the tradition of keeping only forty-three chapters instead of fifty-one, as well as the chapter ordering, remained that of the earlier, i.e. original translation.

After just a short examination of the Armenian text of Sirach one can see the variety of troubling issues regarding, first, the text itself, and then the enumeration of it. Oskan's translation has never been examined from an academic perspective as its value as a translation is small. Zôhrapean's attempt to go to the earliest version of the Armenian text ended up with an abbreviated text, in some instances, with mismatching verses caused by omission of single colas or entire passages. The significance of Zôhrapean's version lies in its resemblance to the Syriac text, which is demonstrated in my comparative chart. It is also important because in a way it helps us to resolve several issues like the canonicity of Sirach in the 5th and consequent centuries and its role within Armenian biblical tradition.

Compared with Zôhrapean's text, that of Bagratowni is in a better condition. Being based on more MSS than the former and also having both Oskan's and Zôhrapean's version, Arsên Bagratowni successfully came up with an edition which is still viewed as the best Grabar version of the Bible (including the text of Sirach). Despite its lack of several passages in the chapters 8, 37, 43 etc., the Bagratowni text is comparatively easier to read and understand as it does not contain the exclusions of verbs from the verses which is a usual characteristic in the Zôhrapean version. For this reason it was used in making the 1994 edition[249] of the Bible mentioned above.

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248 M. L. Margolis, 'Mr. Hart's Ecclesiasticus', Review of Ecclesiasticus. The Greek Text of Codex 248 by J. H. A. Hart in *JQR Vol. 1, No 3* (Pennsylvania University Press, 1911), pp. 403–18.
249 Աստուածաշունչ մատեան Հին և Նոր Կտակարանների, Արևելահայերեն նոր թարգմանութիւն [*Astowacašownč՝ matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranneri, Arewelahayeren nor t՝arg-*

The greatest discoveries in the 20th century Armenian scholarship of Sirach are no doubt the finding of the 1927 Jerusalem text of Sirach chs. 42–46 and the Yerevan text of 1966 of the same chapters. Without these discoveries we would never have known that there was a time when the Armenian text had all 51 chapters of Sirach. The Jerusalem and Yerevan MSS gave a new lease of life to the complex question of the translation of Sirach. A whole new aspect of textual analysis is now open to those scholars who would try to explore more about the earliest Armenian witnesses of Sirach. In particular, the language and style of the Yerevan MSS 5608 give a very firm basis for the presumption that one or more Armenian translations of the first half of the 5th century contained these chapters. Moreover, the use of a text by Zôhrapean which has many parallels with MM. 5608 testifies to the existence of two versions of the identical text, one with the 'addition' of 44–51 and one without.

This brings us to a rational conclusion that a new edition of Sirach, if not critical then at least a diplomatic edition, is a matter of necessity. Without having such a text the translation of Sirach into Modern Armenian will always be difficult. The study of the exhaustive list of all extant MSS of Sirach presented in this thesis can be a point of departure for those who undertake this extremely laborious task. A note of caution must be sounded here though; since not all the MSS in this list have been investigated properly, there is still the possibility of further discoveries of so far missing chapters.

2.9 Four Unique Passages Which Are Found Only in the Armenian Translation

There are four passages in Zôhrapean's version of Sirach[250] which are not found in any other translations.[251] These unique verses have most likely been added to the original text during later centuries by Armenian authors, or alternatively could have been part of a Greek text from which certain amendments were made in the Armenian translation. Neither the Septuagint nor the Hebrew or Syriac texts contain these portions and hence they are very interesting and highly valuable in terms of the uniqueness of the Armenian translations.

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manowt'iwn][Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, A New Eastern Armenian Translation] (MSHE and BSA, Yerevan, 1994).

250 One of them (Sir. 20:28) is extant in the Bagratowni text as well.

251 Ծովական, Սիրաքայ հին հայ թարգմանութիւնները [Covakan, 'Sirak'ay hin hay t'argmanowt'iwnnerə' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 150–3].

The first of these four sections is found in Sir. 16:19. In 16:18–19 Ben Sira talks about the power of God saying that the very highest heaven, the mountains and the foundations of the earth 'միանգամայն ի հայել նորա դողացեալ շարժի[ն]' [miangamayn i hayel nora dołaċeal šarži[n]] (quiver and quake at once, when he looks upon them). As a continuation to this verse the Armenian version adds 'զի բազում են գործք նորա կամելն միայն, որ ի ծածուկ մեծ սքանչելեօք. որպէս զի եւ զարժանապէս օրհնութիւնն յիւրմէ օրհնի, զի ի մերմէ նուաստ օրնութենէս ոչ թերանայ եւ ոչ լիանայ' [zi bazowm en gorcḱ nora kameln miayn, or i cacowk mec sḱančʿeleôḱ. orpês zi ew zaržanapês ôrhnowṫiwnn yiwrmê ôrhni, zi i mermê nowast ôrnowṫenês očʿ ṫeranay ew očʿ lianay] (For many are His wondrous deeds which are hidden in order to be aptly blessed by His blessing, for He becomes neither grater nor smaller by our humble blessing). Similar to this, in Sir. 3:20, the peculiar Armenian translation of which is discussed in the *chart*, Ben Sira says: 'For great is the might of the Lord; but by the humble he is glorified'. The verse does not explicitly state that God wants to be glorified by His creatures; rather, in order to make it clear that our blessings and glorifications are not necessary for God but are important for human beings, the Armenian translation adds in 16:19, 'զի ի մերմէ նուաստ օրնութենէս ոչ թերանայ եւ ոչ լիանայ' [zi i mermê nowast ôrnowṫenês očʿ ṫeranay ew očʿ lianay] (for He becomes neither greater nor smaller by our humble blessing). It is interesting that in this regard Isaiah has a different approach. In his prophecy we see that God wants His creatures to glorify Him and no one else: 'For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for why should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another'.[252] A similar message from God is also found in the Decalogue where God orders not to have other gods but only Him. 'You shall not bow down to them [idols] or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments'.[253] It can be implied from this passage that God actually demands that his creatures give praise to him. In this context one might find this addition to the Armenian text of Sirach rather ambiguous. However, if we look at it from a slightly different perspective, we can see that although God demands that we worship Him only by constantly praising His name,[254] He leaves His creatures with freedom of choice. It is left entirely to human beings whether they want

252 Is. 48:11.
253 Ex. 20:5–6.
254 Heb. 13:15.

to praise God or not. On the other hand, throughout the Bible God shows that both man's prosperity and his adversity are in His hands and not in man's own power,[255]

> That this grateful temper of mind, which proceeds from a faithful steadfast dependence on God's providence, we can never perform this duty of praise and thanksgiving to our Maker heartily as we ought: and therefore... as a necessary consequence, that none but the righteous and just are qualified to rejoice in the Lord and be thankful.[256]

Of course, many realize that for their own sake it is important to glorify the Lord, but that realization must be based on loving God and trusting Him.[257] Reading the preceding verse of this addition in the Zôh. text one can see that Sirach's intention is to demonstrate the ultimate power of God over the world: that He could harden even the Pharaoh[258] and that the entire world trembles when God looks at it. This passage in the Armenian text explains that there are even more wonders than those mentioned which God temporarily hides from human beings so that they may be revealed only to those who can see Him in his great glory. Thus, this verse can also be understood as another reference to afterlife but unlike Sir. 7:17. This idea of praising God because of loving Him but not fearing Him is present all over the OT. For example, Psalm 117 says that human beings must praise the Lord for his eternal love towards His creatures, indicating at the same time that it is not an obligation but rather the right response to the overwhelming love that God has for human beings: 'Praise the Lord, all you nations! Extol him, all you peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord'. Yakob Nalean does not have this verse in his commentary as the texts that he used did not contain it.

The second portion, which is at 17:12, reads:

> Չարն զչարութիւն ուսոյց նոցա, եւ զԱստուած եւ զէրն արարչական ետ արհամարհել նոցա: Եւ զեւթնեակ շնորհսն հան ի նոցանէ, եւ եւթն յանցանօք ելից զնոսա. եւ յերկրէ ուստի առան՝ զնոյն անիծից երկիր ժառանգեցին. եւ յետ այնորիկ մեղս ազգի ազգի ուսոյց նոցա, մինչեւ ջրով ջնջել զյիշատակ նոցա: Եւ որդւովն Քանանու դարձեալ դարձան ի չարութիւն միաշուրթն լեզուաւ մինչեւ յաշտարակն վաղափուղ.

255 Cf. R. Cocks, *The Beauty and Necessity of the Duty of Praising God: A Sermon Preached at Woodstock, June 7th, 1716. On the Thanksgiving-Day* (London, 1716), p. 3.
256 R. Cocks, '*The Beauty and Necessity of the Duty of Praising God*' (London, 1716), p. 3.
257 2 Sam. 22:33.
258 Sir. 16:15.

> Č'arn zč'arowt'iwn owsoyc' noca, ew zAstowac ew zsêrn ararč'akan et arhamarhel noca: Ew zewt'neak šnorhsn han i nocanê, ew ewt'n yanc'anôk' elic' znosa. ew yerkrê owsti ařan' znoyn anicic' erkir žařangec'in. ew yet aynorik mełs azgi azgi owsoyc' noca, minč'ew jrov jnjel zyišatak noca: Ew ordwovn K'ananow darjeal darjan i č'arowt'iwn miašowrt'n lezowaw minč'ew yaštarakn vałap'owl
>
> The Evil One taught them wicked things and made them neglect God and [His] creational love. And [the evil one] took out from them the seven graces and filled them with seven sins. They inherited the same earth from which they were made, according to the same curse. And after this he taught them the sins of the nations until their memory was wiped up by water [the flood]. And again through the son of Canaan they turned continuously to evil until the untimely destruction of the tower.

This passage is placed straight after the verse where '[Աստուած] պատուէր ետ նոցա զգո՛յշ լինել յամենայն չարէ, եւ պահել զպատուիրանն ըղձալի' [Astowac] patowêr et noca zgo՛yš linel yamenayn č'arê, ew pahel zpatowirann əłjali] (God ordered them to beware of all evil and to keep the desirable commandment). In order to make it clearer who the author is referring to, i.e. who the evil people are, the translator of the Armenian text added this short passage. Interestingly, if we examine only Zôhrapean's text, this passage does not perfectly fit into the context of the whole chapter, but in the Bagratowni text which lacks this addition, the verse preceding it says: 'Եւ պատուիրեաց իւրաքանչիւրոց յաղագս մերձաւորին...' [Ew patowireac' iwrak'anč'iwroc' yałags merjaworin...] (and He gave them commandment concerning their neighbour/relative). Thus, combining the two texts of Zôhrapean and Bagratowni it becomes clearer that the author who added these verses did so in order to make his reader beware of those who might be led astray by evil powers so that those who keep his commandments do not share the same fate.

The third section is unique (20:28) because it is found not only in Zôhrapean but also in the Bagratowni text. It gives an additional reading which dramatically changes the style of the whole passage. The passage starts in both texts with a description of all the destructions that may happen to a liar or a thief.[259] Then in 20:28 the author changes the style from informative to exhortative:

> Որդեա՛կ՝ պահեա՛ զբանս իմ, եւ խելամուտ լեր ի դմա՛ ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, զի եւ որդի հարազատ եւ ժառանգ մեծազգի որ զնախնեացն զմեծանձնութիւն ո՛չ նորոգէ եւ յառաջ բերէ՝ ամօթ մե՛ծ եւ նախատինք է նա հաւուց իւրոց, եւ անէծք նորոգ.

259 Sir. 20:24–26.

> Ordeá k` paheá zbans im, ew xelamowt ler ỉ dmá i towê ew i gišeri, zi ew ordi harazat ew žaṙang mecazgi or znaxneaċn zmecanjnowṫiwn ó č̇ norogê ew yaṙaǰ berê` amôṫ mé c ew naxatinḱ ê na hawowċ iwroċ, ew anêcḱ norog
>
> My child, keep my words and ponder upon them day and night, for even one's own son, heir of a noble nation, if he does not renew and develop his ancestors' honour, then he becomes a shame and reproach for his fathers and a new curse).

There is an indisputable relationship between this passage and the beginning of the following chapter. After this addition, chapter 20 resumes in the same style as before the insertion, but chapter 21 starts with words of instruction similar to those of 20:28 (My child) giving an exhortation which is very similar to the style of 20:28: 'Have you sinned, my child? Do so no more, but ask forgiveness for your past sins. Flee from sin as from a snake; for if you approach sin, it will bite you'.[260] It can be inferred from this that the author of the additional verse followed the style of chapter 21, connecting it with the ending of chapter 20 (27–31). Passages written in a similar style but found also in the original texts and in other translations can be found also in Sir. 3:12–13, 3:14–18, 10:6–7.

The final passage of the above mentioned four, is in Sir. 31:18 and exists only in the Zôhrapean text. It is the longest verse in the entire Armenian translation of Sirach coming straight after verse 31:16.[261]

> Խորհեա՛ դու բարի անձին քում, զնոյն կամեա՛ց եւ ընկերին: Զի եթէ դու բարի կամիս քեզ` եւ այլոց չար, ժամանակ տացէ քեզ Տէր եւթնպատիկ չար, զի դու ընկերին բարի ո՛չ կամեցար: Ա՛ռն անմտի եւ հաց քուլեփի միտս մի՛ դներ, եւ խրատու իմաստութեան հաւանեա՛: Որ իմաստուն է եւ խաղաղարար, յամենայն ժամ ցանկայ տեսանել զնա: Մարդ որ յաղմուկ սովորէ` Սատանայի նմանէ, զի Սատանա՛յ բարի ո՛չ լինի` եւ ո՛չ մարդն այն խաղաղարար: Հա՛ն զնա ի միջոյ` եւ խաղաղացիր ի նմանէ, զի ա՛յլք որ չգիտէին զինքն` գիտացեն, եւ զքեզ ո՛չ պարսաւեսցեն, եւ հալածեսցեն զնա քաղաքէ ի քաղաք. մինչեւ վախճանի նա` ուր ո՛չ գիտէ: Որդեա՛կ ա՛ռն անմտի հանդիպեցայ ես` եւ շատ տագնապեցայ ի նմանէ, զի էր ծառայ սիրուն եւ հաւատարիմ, եւ դառնութեամբ խօսէր բերան նորա. եւ զխօսս անձին իմոյ` եւ զընկերի արդար ամուսնոյ` պատմէր առաջի թշնամեաց յայպն եւ ի կատականս: Իմաստուն բանիւք խրատեցի զնա, եւ ո՛չ լուաւ, հատուցի նմա զան` եւ հաւանեցաւ: Լաւ է առն մորոսի բիր գլխոյն, քան բարձս փետրալիցս, զի իմաստութեամբ ո՛չ խրատի. մի՛ յապաղեր տալ նմա զօգուտ նորա. զի թէ վաղ եւ անազան` այսու խրատեսցի նա.

260 Sir. 21:1–2.

261 Zôhrapean omits vv.14–21 of LXX, οὖ ἐὰν ἐπιβλέψῃ, μὴ ἐκτείνῃς χεῖρα… ἀνάστα μεσοπωρῶν καὶ ἀναπαύσῃ. It also does not have verse 17, and hence why this passage comes after 31:16 which is 31:13 in LXX and NRSV.

Xorhea´ dow bari anjin ǩowm, znoyn kameaċ ew ənkerin: Zi eťê dow bari kamis ǩez` ew ayloċ č'ar, žamanak taċê ǩez Têr ewťnpatik č'ar, zi dow ənkerin bari o´č' kameċar: A´ŗn anmti ew haċ ǩowleṗi mits mi´ dner, ew xratow imastowťean hawanea´: Or imastown ê ew xałałarar, yamenayn žam ċankay tesanel zna: Mard or yałmowk sovorê` Satanayi nmanê, zi Satana´y bari o´č' lini` ew o´č' mardn ayn xałałarar: Ha´n zna i miǰoy` ew xałałaċir i nmanê, zi a´ylǩ or č'gitêin zinǩn` gitasċen, ew zǩez o´č' parsawesċen, ew halacesċen zna ǩałaǩê i ǩałaǩ. minč'ew vaxčani na` owr o´č' gitê: O°rdeak` a´ŗn anmti handipeċay es` ew šat tagnapeċay i nmanê, zi êr caŗay sirown ew hawatarim, ew daŗnowťeamb xôsêr beran nora. ew zxôss anjin imoy` ew zənkeri ardar amowsnoy` patmêr aŗaǰi ťšnameaċ yaypn ew i katakans: Imastown baniwǩ xrateċi zna, ew o´č' lowaw, hatowċi nma gan` ew hawaneċaw: Law ê aŗn morosi bir glxoyn, ǩan barjs ṗetraliċs, zi imastowťeamb o´č' xrati. mi´ yapałer tal nma zôgowt nora. zi ťê vał ew anagan` aysow xratesċi na

Think good for yourself and wish the same for your friend. For if you wish good things only for you and for others you wish evil [then] the Lord will give you sevenfold evil things, because you did not wish goodness for your friend. Do not listen to a foolish man and an insatiable bread[262] but like the instruction of wisdom. Whoever is wise and a peacemaker, he always wants to see him [God]. A man that learns in noise becomes like Satan, for Satan cannot be good, neither can that man be a peacemaker. Take him [Satan] out of you and find peace from him, for those who did not know him will know and will not punish you. They will persecute him from town to town until he dies in a place about which he does not know. My child, I met a foolish man and was very alarmed for him, because he was a loyal and good servant but his mouth was full of bitterness: he was telling jokes to enemies about me and his just friend. I instructed him with wise words but he did not listen to me. Do not hesitate to show him what is good for him for sooner or later he will learn from it).

This passage replaces a rather significant part of chapter 31 in which Ben Sira gives some instructions concerning specifically food consumption and the problems that can be caused by overeating. Zôhrapean carries on from verse 26 (v.22 in LXX). The only verse in 31:14 – 21 of LXX that somehow resembles this insertion in the Armenian text is 31:15, 'Judge your neighbour's feelings by your own, and in every matter be thoughtful'. The beginning of the long Armenian passage has an exhortation on thinking good for ones own self and being thoughtful of a friend/neighbour as one's own self as well. This is the only part of the Armenian text that can be related to the part which is omitted from the Zôhrapean text. The rest of it differs both by its style and content: especially the part in which the author relates to the reader or maybe to a student[263] about meeting a foolish man. Nowhere else in his book does Ben Sira mention *a foolish man* who did

262 'Insatiable bread' is used as a metaphor for a person who has nothing to give you, in other words he has no wisdom to share with you.

263 The style of the passage shows that it was possibly read for students in medieval Armenian schools in monasteries.

not listen to his master's, i. e. Ben Sira's words. It is obvious that this passage is an addition that was written by a teacher when addressing his exhortation to his students. It involves the teacher's personal experience related to an alumnus of his school, 'I met a foolish man and was very alarmed for him'. It may also be implied from the passage that the addressee student knows the person who is the subject of his instructor's message: 'Do not hesitate to show him what is good for him for sooner or later he will learn from it'. Again, this final statement of the passage may be regarded as a contradiction to what Ben Sira is about to say in 22:9, 'Whoever teaches a fool is like one who glues potsherds together, or who rouses a sleeper from deep slumber'. In the latter Ben Sira is not very optimistic about teaching *a fool* as he considers it a waste of time. In my view, the only way of reconciling the two remarks which are of such different character is to explain the additional statement in the Zôhrapean text as an order to be an example for the fools and not try to teach them. Otherwise, it can be stated that the editor's or the copyist's view who added this passage somewhat differed from Ben Sira's.

It is apparent that all these passages found solely in the Armenian text have been added to the book in order to give more insight into the meaning of the topics in the preceding and succeeding verses. Because of the wide use of Sirach for teaching purposes in medieval Armenian schools, this book was copied many times and thus these amendments have made into the text instead of being in the margins where I believe their initial place was. The style and the context of the passages show that it is highly unlikely that there was a time when these were in a Greek text and that same Greek text was the source of the Armenian. However, the explanatory nature of these unique verses has long made them homogenous with the rest of the text of Sirach. As in the case of Sir. 7:17 in the Greek text, which significantly differs from the Hebrew version, these Armenian verses too may be considered as an influence of the time and culture in which this book was mainly read.

2.10 A Comparative Chart of the Extant Armenian Texts of Sirach

The chart presented bellow is a comparison of the extant Armenian versions of Sirach with Greek (LXX)[264] and with occasional references to Syriac and Hebrew

264 Generally, all the extant Armenian versions of Sir. are translations from Gr. LXX with occa-

texts as well as English (NRSV). Because of the amount of work and the complexity of the text of Sirach I examine only three major passages. First, I analyse chs. 1–4 and 18–20, because these chapters have the most divergent readings of the text. Second, I compare the additional chs. 42–46 discovered in 1927 at Jerusalem St. James' MS depository and 1966 at Yerevan Maštocʻ Matenadaran as these chapters open up a whole new horizon in the studies of the Armenian text of Sirach.

There are many differences not only between the Armenian texts and other translations but among the Armenian texts themselves. Apart from disagreements between the tenses in many verses they also differ dramatically in the meaning of some key verses. For instance, for 1:19 (which is under 1:24 in both the Zôhrapean and Bagratowni texts) the two editions show the following difference. According to Zôhrapean it is the 'discerning comprehension and wisdom' which is being heightened in those who keep the Lord's words while in Bagratowni 'the words' of those who keep His words/commandments are being heightened. The Oskanean text differs from the previous two because of being translated not from Greek or Syriac but from Latin and that is why it has all the chapters apart from 51.

Those verses with no significant differences in translations have not been commented on. Notes and comments on those which have differences appear in the 'notes' cell. In the latter I add round brackets where I want to give an explanation/translation or to make the meaning of certain words or phrases more explicit, and square brackets where I provide an additional word or phrase to make clear the meaning of sentences in English.

In the first part of the chart there are two columns for the two Armenian versions[265] of Sirach and in the second part I add two extra columns for the newly discovered chapters. For the enumeration of verses I use Joseph Ziegler's[266] system which is most commonly used by scholars. The most significant part of this chart is the examination of the Jerusalem (1927) and Yerevan (1966) fragments which have not yet been adequately examined and which do not exist in any other manuscript known to scholarship so far.

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sional allusions to hexaplaric and lucianic texts. The portions which are preserved from the earliest (Syriac) translation(s) are very few.

265 Oskan Erewancʻi's [Ոսկան Երևանցի] translation does not have a separate column in the chart because of being almost a literal translation of Latin. However, some references are made to this translation throughout the work.

266 Ziegler, J., *Sapientia Jesu Filii Sirach* (Göttingen, 1965).

Texts Used

Zôh. Աստուածաշնունչ մատեան Հին եւ Նոր կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownč' matean Hin ew Nor ktakaranac' Vol. 1* (ed. Y. Zôhrapean, Venice, 1805)].

Bag. Գիրք Աստուածաշունչ Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց [*Girk' Astowacašownč' Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'* (ed. A. Bagratowni, Venice 1860)].

Os. Աստուածաշունչ հնոց և նորոց կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownč' hnoc' ew noroc' ktakaranac'* (ed. O. Erewanc'i, Amsterdam, 1666)].

Yer. MM MS N. 5608, 1363, pp. 102r-147v
The oldest of the two extant copies of the Armemian text of Sir. chs. 42 – 46. Presented by Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ Abgaryan, G., 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan norahayt hatvacner' in *Etchmiadzin No. 11 – 12,* (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60 – 70].

Jer. Jer.SJ MS N. 2558, 1615, 369v-381r. Presented by Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grkin hin t'argmanowt'enên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246 – 50].

Gr. Rahlfs, A., *Septuaginta: Id est, Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes. Editio minor*
(Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979).

Syr. Calduch-Benages, N., Ferrer, J., and Liesen, J., *Wisdom of the Scribe: Diplomatic Edition of the Syriac Version of the Book of Ben Sira according to Codex Ambrosianus, with translatios in Spanish and English* (Estella, 2003).

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
Prol.	✗	✗	✓	✓
	The Prologue is missing from both Zôh. and Bag. Bibles and is only included in the Os. translation from Vulgate.			
1:3	✓	✓	✓	✓
	In both Armenian editions the words '*ἄβυσσον*' and '*σοφίαν*' are not divided, i. e. they are translated as the abyss (depth) *of* wisdom (ἄβυσσον *του* σοφία)'զանդունդս իմաստութեան'.			
1:5	✗	✗	✓	✓
	This secondary verse is included neither in GI nor in the Syr. Bible. Nalean used in his commentary the Os. translation of it: 'Աղբիւր իմաստութեան Բանն Աստուած ի բարձունս եւ մուտք նորա պատուիրան մշտնջենաւոր'. [Ałbiwr imastowt'ean Bann Astowac i barjowns ew mowtk nora patowiran mštnǰenawor] GII (Πηγὴ σοφίας λόγος Θεοῦ ἐν ὑψίστοις, καὶ αἱ πορεῖαι αὐτῆς ἐντολαὶ αἰώνιοι).			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
1:6	✓ 5	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. 'արմատ**ք', [armatḱ] 'roots' instead of sg. 'ρίζα',** Os. 'արմատ'.			
1:7	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Os. 'Խրատ իմաստութեան որո՞ յայտ եղեւ եւ բացայայտ եւ բազմապատութիւն մտից նորա ո՞վ իմացաւ'. [Xrat imastowṫean oro՞ yayt ełew ew baċayayt ew bazmapatowṫiwn mtiċ nora o՞v imaċaw] (To whom has been reviled the instruction of wisdom and who had understood the multiplicity of her thought?).			
1:8	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Os. translation differs from all others: 'Մի է բարձրեալն Արարիչ ամենակար. եւ թագաւոր կարօղ. ահեղ յոյժ. որ նստի ի վերայ աթոռոյ իւրոյ եւ իշխող Աստուած', [Mi ê barjrealn Araričʿ amenakar. ew ṫagawor karôł. aheł yoyž. or nsti i veray aṫoṙoy iwroy ew išxoł Astowac] (One is heavenly, almighty Creator and omnipotent [and] most powerful King and reigning God that sits on His throne).			
1:9	✓ 9b-10a	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. includes in v. 9 only the first part of the verse 'Ինքն Տէր հաստատեց զնա', 'եւ սփռեաց զնա...' [Inḱn Têr hastateċ zna', 'ew sṗṙeaċ zna...] (and He *spread* her...)is under 10a. Bag. 'եւ ետես եւ թուեաց զնա, եւ եհեղ զնա ի վերայ գործոց իւրոց...' [ew etes ew ṫoweaċ zna, ew eheł zna i veray gorcoċ iwroċ...] (and saw her and numbered her and poured her upon His *deeds*). Os. adds 'Ստեղծ զնա **Հոգւով Սրբով', [Stełc zna Hogwov Srbov] 'created through the Holy Spirit'.**			
1:10	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. '...եւ յամենայն մսեղիս ըստ պարգևաց իւրոց' [...ew yamenayn msełis əst pargewaċ iwroċ] (...and upon all flesh according to His gifts). This verse in Zôh. does not have 'եւ ետես եւ թուեաց զնա. [ew etes ew ṫoweaċ zna] and 'եւ բաշխեաց զնա սիրելեաց իւրոց' [ew bašxeaċ zna sireleaċ iwroċ]. None of the Armenian translations has 'Love of the Lord is glorious wisdom; to those to whom he appears he apportions her, that they may see him'.			
1:12	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. 'շնորհս' [šnorhs] (grace) instead of 'ուրախութիւն' [owraxowṫiwn] (joy).			
1:14–15	✓ 16	✓ 16	✓	✓
	There is a different enumeration in both Zôh. and Bag. versions i. e. there are no verses 14–15. Instead, these two verses are under verse 16 with no difference in meaning. Os. gives a different translation of these verses: 'Իղձ Աստուծոյ պատուելի իմաստութիւն: Սակայն Որոց երեւեսցի ի տեսլեան. ըղձան նմա տեսլեամբ. եւ ի ծանօթութիւն մեծամեծաց իւրոց' [Iłj Astowcoy patoweli imastowṫiwn: Sakayn Oroċ erewesċi i teslean. əłjan nma tesleamb. ew i canôṫowṫiwn mecamecaċ iwroċ].			
1:16	✓ 20	✓ 20	✓	✓

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	Zôh. and Os. ‘Սկիզբն զգօնութեան երկիւղ Տեառն’ [Skizbn zgônowtean erkiwł Teaṙn]. Instead of ‘σοφίας’ Zôh. and Os. use ‘εὐλαβεια’, ‘զգօնութիւն’ [zgônowtiwn]. Zôh. ‘արմտեաց’ [armteaċ] (with her roots) instead of ‘ի պտղոց’ [i ptłoċ] (from the fruits).			
1:17–19	✓ 21–24	✓ 21–24	✓	✓
	Os. ‘Երկիւղ Տեառն գիտութիւն կրօնաւորութեան’ [Erkiwł Teaṙn gitowtiwn krônaworowtean]. (Fear of the Lord is the knowledge of spirituality). Zôh. ‘պսակ զգօնութեան’ [psak zgônowtean] (crown of *watchfulness*).			
1:18	✓ 23	✓ 23	✓	✓
	Bag. ‘Բուսուսցէ զխաղաղութիւն եւ զառողջութիւն բժշկութեան եւետես եւ թուեաց’, [Bowsowsċê zxałałowtiwn ew zaṙołǰowtiwn bžškowtean ew etes ew ṫoweaċ] Will grant peace and health. He saw her and took her measure. Zôh. ‘Իբրեւ հայեցաւ եւ համբուրեաց զնա’ [Ibrew hayeċaw ew hambowreaċ zna] (When He looked [at her] He kissed her).			
1:19	✓ 24	✓ 24	✓	✓
	Os. repeats 1:13. Bag. instead of ‘ῥῆμα’, (զբանս) [zbans] uses ‘δόξαν’ (փառք) [p̣aṙḱ]. Zôh.‘Զհանճար եւ զիմաստութիւն աւանդապահաց նորա բարձրացոյց’ [Zhančar ew zimastowtiwn awandapahaċ nora barjraċoyċ] (He heightened discerning comprehension and wisdom of those keeping His words). Similar alterations can be seen in Syr. text as well: e. g. in 11:12 instead of ‘the eye of the Lord’ it is ‘the word of the Lord’.			
1:20	✓ 25	✓ 25	✓	✓
1:21	✗	✗	✗	✗
	This verse is missing from Zôh. and Bag., as well as from some Greek texts and NRSV. It is preserved only in GII. Os. ‘Երկիւղ Տեառն աղարտէ զմեղս’, [Erkiwł Teaṙn ałartê zmełs] (Fear of the Lord drives away sins).			
1:22	✓ 28–30	✓ 28–30	✓	✓
	In Zôh. and Bag. first part of this verse is under verse 28, ‘Ոչ կարիցէ սրտմտութիւն անիրաւ արդարանալ’, [Oč‘ karicê srtmtowtiwn aniraw ardaranal] (Unjust anger (θυμὸς) cannot be justified) and the second and third parts under 29 and 30, Bag. ‘քանզի մէտ սրտմտութեան նորա կործանումն նորին’, [ḳanzi mêt srtmtowtean nora korcanowmn norin] (for his anger is his distraction). Os. 28 ‘բարկութիւն ցասման նորա’ [barkowtiwn ċasman nora]. The first part is generalized while the second part is personalised (նորին). Bag. ‘յետոյ վերստին տացէ նմա ուրախութիւն’ [yetoy verstin taċê nma owraxowtiwn] (and [He] will again give him joy), Zôh. ‘եւ մինչեւ ի վախճան ի մէջ կալ յամենայն ուրախութեան’ [ew minč‘ew i vaxčan i mêǰ kal yamenayn owraxowtean] (And he will remain in joy until his death). According to Bag. the joy will be given to a person once for an in-			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	definite period but Zôh. stresses that the joy will be eternal ‘մինչեւ ի վախճանի’ [minč̔ew i vaxčani].			
1:23	✓ 29b	✓ 29b	✓	✓
	In Bag. second part of verse 29 ‘առ ժամանակ մի յանձին կալցի երկայնամիտ եւ յետոյ վերստին տացէ նմա ուրախութիւն’ [ar̄ žamanak mi yanjin kalċi erkaynamit ew yetoy verstin taċê nma owraxowt̔iwn] (for a while he will be patient and afterwards [God] will again give him joy).Zôh. adds ‘ունել զսիրտ’ [ownel zsirt] (rule over your heart). None of the other Arm. translations have it. The verse does not start with ‘a patient man’ because the subject of the sentence is carried on from the previous verse.			
1:24	✓ 30	✓ 30	✓	✓
	In all three Arm. verions this text is under v. 30. Only Os. gives a slightly altered version adding instead of‘κρύψει’, a transl. from the Vul. ‘բարի զգացումն’, [bari zgaċowmn] (Bonus sensus).			
1:25	✓ 31–32	✓ 31	✓	✓
	Os. first part ‘Ներ գանձուց իմաստութեան նշանակութիւն խրատու’ [Ner ganjowċ imastowt̔ean nšanakowt̔iwn xratow] (The meaning of a parable is in the treasures of wisdom) is under verse 31 and the second part under 32 ‘իսկ գարշումն ի մեղաւորէ պաշտոն առ Աստուած’ [isk garšowmn i meławorê pašton ar̄ Astowac] (And hating a sinner is a service to God). The second part of this verse, which is again translated from Latin, does not have the same meaning as the same verse in Zôh. or Bag. texts where ‘the service to God is an abomination for a sinner’. In Os. hating a sinner is a service to God. Apparently, the translator of the 1666 text did not understand the meaning of ‘execratio autem peccatori, cultura Dei’ in the Vulgate and therefore gave a mistranslation.			
1:26	✓ 33	✗	✓	✓
	Os. 33 translates ‘զարդարութիւն’ [zardarowt̔iwn] (Vul. justitiam) instead of ‘պատուիրանս’ [patowirans] (ἐντολάς). Verse 33 in Zôh. and Bag texts. 32 is missing from Bag. Zôh. ‘Ով դու որդեակ, ցանկա զիմաստութեան եւ պահեա զնա’ [Ov dow ordeak, ċanka zimastowt̔ean ew pahea zna] (O Son, desire wisdom and keep her). It is not ‘ἐντολάς’ that here that are need to be kept but ‘σοφία’.			
1:27	✓ 34–35	✓ 34	✓	✓
	Os. 34 adds ‘լցուսցէ զգանձն նորա’ [lċowsċê zganjn nora] (he shall complete his treasures). Verse 34–35 in Zôh. and 34 in Bag. texts instead of 27.			
1:28	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Zôh. and Os. 36, Bag. 35. ‘միտս երկմիտս/երկբայ մտօք’ [mits erkmits/erkbay mtôk̔] (double minded) instead of ‘double heart’.			
1:29	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Os. 37 ‘Մի կեղծաւորիր առաջի մարդկան, եւ մի գայթակղեսցիս շրթամբք քով’, [Mi kełcaworir ar̄aǰi mardkan, ew mi gayt̔akłesċis šrt̔ambk̔ k̔ov] (Do not be a hypocrite in front of people and do not be a stumbling block with your			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	lips). Bag. 37 ‘Մի կեղծաւորիր ի բերանս մարդկան եւ շրթանց քոց զգոյշ լինիջիր’ [Mi kełcaworir i berans mardkan ew šrťanċ ḱoċ zgoyš liniǰir] (Do not be a hypocrite ‘ἐν στόμασιν ἀνθρώπων’ and keep watch over your lips). In this verse it becomes clear how close the Bag. texts are to the Greek translation. ‘ի բերանս մարդկան’, [i berans mardkan] (lit. in the mouths of people) is an expression from the ‘յունաբան’ [yownaban] ‘Hellenic’ school which is used in this context only. While Zôh. ‘առաջի մարդկան…եւ շրթանց քոց զգո՛յշ լինիջի՛ր’ [ar̄aǰi mardkan…ew šrťanċ ḱoċ zgo´yš liniǰi´r] (in the eyes of men…your lips be prudent constantly) shows the Syr. influence.			
1:30	✗	✓ 38, 40	✓	✓
	This last verse of the chapter is missing from Zôh. Bag. skips v. 39 and enumerates 38, 40 in. Verse 39 is missing from these tex. Os. divides verse 40 in line with the Vulgate and puts ‘Եւ բացայայտեսցէ Աստուած զծածուկսն քո. եւ ի մէջ ժողովարանի կոխան արասցէ զքեզ’ [Ew baċayaytesċê Astowac zcacowksn ḱo. ew i mêǰ žołovarani koxan arasċê zḱez] under verse 39.			
2:1	✓	✓	✓	✓
	There are two major differences in this verse between Zôh. and Bag. texts. Bag starts with ‘Որդեակ…’ [Ordeak…] (Son/Child…) and Zôh. with ‘Որդեակ իմ…’ [Ordeak im…] (My son/child…): the former is a translation from Greek ‘τέκνον’ and the later from Syriac.[267] There are no significant differences between Zôh., Bag. version and LXX, apart from the word ‘Θεῷ’ (Աստուած) [Astowac] which LXX adds after ‘Κυρίῳ’ (Տեառն). Os. adds ‘կաց յարդարութեան եւ յերկիւղիւ’ [kaċ yardarowťean ew yerkiwłiw] (Stay in justice and in fear), influenced by Vul.			
2:2	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Os. adds ‘խոնարհեցո զունկն քո եւ ընկալ զբանս հանճարոյ, եւ մի աճապարեսցես…’ [xonarheċo zownkn ḱo ew ənkal zbans hančaroy, ew mi ačaparesċes…] (incline your ear and receive the words of understanding, and do not haste…), influenced by Vul.			
2:3	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. ‘մի անհաւատանար’ [mi anhawatanar] (do not be unfaithful) instead of ‘մի հեռանար’ [mi her̄anar] (do nor go away). Os. adds ‘Տեւեա համբերութեամբ Աստուծոյ… զի բողբոջեսցես…’ [Tewea hamberowťeamb Astowcoy… zi bołboǰesċes…] (Remain with God patiently… in order to bud…), the later word ‘ բողբոջեսցես’ [bołboǰesċes] slightly differs in meaning from the word in Vulgate ‘crescat’.			
2:4	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	Bag. follow the LXX and translates 'ի փոփոխումն' [i p̣op̣oxowmn] 'ἀλλάγμασιν' (while NRSV does not translate it. Zôh. adds 'ուրախութեամբ ընկալ' [owraxowťeamb ənkal] (accept with joy). Also 'ταπεινώσεώς' is translated 'տառապանաց', [taŕapanaċ] 'suffer' and not 'նուաստացումն' [nowastaċowmn] 'humiliation' as it is in Os.			
2:5	✓	✓	✓	✓
	'ταπεινώσεως' is translated as 'suffer' Bag. Zôh. and Os. use ''խոնարհութեան' [xonarhowťean] which is closer in meaning to Vul. (humiliationis).			
2:6	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. 'Հաւատա ի Տէր' [Hawata i Têr] (believe in the Lord), Bag. 'Հաւատա նմա' [Hawata nma] (πίστευσον αὐτῷ). Bag. 'պաշտպանասցէ' [paštpanasċê] (will protect) instead of Zôh. 'օգնեսցէ' (will help). Another meaning of 'ἀντιλήψεται'.			
2:7	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Bag. 'մի գլորիցիք' [mi gloriċiḱ] (not to whirl). Zôh. and Os. 'մի կործանեսջիք' [mi korcanesǰiḱ] (not to be destroyed).			
2:8	✗	✓	✓	✓
	Missing from Zôh.			
2:9	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Os. translates 'յուսացարուք ի նա' [yowsaċarowḱ i na] (hope in Him) following Vul. Greek and other Arm. Translations 'յուսացարուք ի բարիս' [yowsaċarowḱ i baris] (εἰς ἀγαθά).			
2:10	✓ 11 – 12	✓ 11 – 12	✓	✓
	There is no verse 10 in Zôh. and Bag. But the same content of the LXX v. 10 is given in verses 11 – 12. Zôh. 'յահի նորա' [yahi nora] (in the fear of him), Bag. 'յերկիւղ Տեառն' [yerkiwł Teaŕn] (fear of the Lord), Os. has v. 10 as follows 'Որք երկնչիք ի Տեառնէ եւ լուսաւորեսցին սիրտք ձեր' [Orḱ erknčiḱ i Teaŕnê ew lowsaworesċin sirtḱ jer] (Those who fear God, love Him and He will enlighten your hearts).			
2:11	✓ 13	✓ 13	✓	✓
	Os. 13, 'Զի գթած եւ ողորմած է Աստուած եւ թողու յաւուր տառապանաց զմեղս. եւ հովանի է ամենեցուն խնդրողաց իւրոց ճշմարտութեամբ' [Zi gťac ew ołormac ê Astowac ew ťołow yawowr taŕapanaċ zmełs. ew hovani ê amenecown xndrołaċ iwroċ čšmartowťeamb] (For compassionate and merciful is God and [He] forgives the sins in the day of tribulation and [He is a shelter for all who seek Him in truth]).			
2:12	✓ 14	✓ 14	✓	✓
	Os. 14 'Վա՛յ երկմտից եւ շրթանց անօրինաց' եւ ձեռաց չարագործաց' եւ մեղաւորի, որ շրջիցիյերկրիերկոքումբք ճանապարհոք' [Vay erkmtiċ ew šŕťanċ anôrinaċ' ew jeŕaċ č'aragorcaċ' ew meławori, or šŕǰiċiyerkrierkokowmbḱ čanaparhoḱ]. (Woe to the duplicitous heart, and to the wicked lips, and to the hands that do evil, and to the sinner who walks the earth by two			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	paths?). On the first word of the verse ‘ Վա՞յ’ (Woe?) a question mark is put which makes a rather odd impression as if this verse is a question and not a statement and condemnation. Two consequent verses after this also have a question mark. There is no question mark neither in Zôh. nor in Bag. texts.			
2:13	✓ 15	✓ 15	✓	✓
	Bag., Os. ‘Վա՞յ լքելոց սրտիւք որք ոչ հաւատան Աստուծոյ եւ վասն այնորիկ ոչ պահպանին ի նմանէ’ [Va՞y lkeloc srtiwk ork oč‘ hawatan Astowcoy ew vasn aynorik oč‘ pahpanin i nmanê]. (Woe to the desolute in heart who do not trust in God and because of it they are not being protected by Him). Zôh. gives a very short line continuing as a result of the v. 14. ‘Վաս այնորիկ մի՛ ապրեսցին’ [Vas aynorik mi՛ apresc‘in] (because of it they will not be saved).			
2:14	✓16–17	✓ 16–17	✓	✓
	Verse 16 Bag., Zôh. and Os. divide into two parts: Zôh. 17 ‘...թէ զինչ հասցէ նմա յաւուր գալստեան Տեառն’ [...t‘ê zinč‘ hasc‘ê nma yawowr galstean Tearn] (...that what will fall him when the Lord arrives). and Os. 16–17 ‘Վա՞յ այնոցիկ, որ կորուսին զհամբերութիւն եւ ոյք ի բաց թողին զճանապարհս ուղիղս եւ դարձան ի ճանապարհս թիւրս: 17 Եւ զինչ արասցեն‘ յորժամ նկատել սկսանիցի Տէր’, [Va՞y aynoc‘ik, or korowsin zhamberowt‘iwn ew oyk i bac‘ t‘oł‘s zčanaparhs owł‘s ew darjan i čanaparhs t‘iwrs: 17 Ew zinč‘ arasc‘en‘ yoržam nkatel sksanic‘i Têr](Woe to those who have lost endurance and who have abandoned upright ways, and who have turned aside to depraved ways! And what will they do when the Lord begins to see [it]?). In Vul. ‘*cum inspicere cœperit Dominus?*’.			
2:15	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Verse 18 corresponds to the verse 15 of LXX. Zôh. ‘Երկիւղածք Տեառն... պահեն զպատուրանս նորա’ [Erkiwłack‘ Tearn... pahen zpatowrans nora] (Those fearing the Lord... obey his *commandments*), ‘զպատուիրանս’ [zpatowirans] is used instead of ‘զճանապարհս’ [zčanaparhs]. Os. 18 ‘Երկիւղածք Տեառն, ոչ լիցին անհնազանդք բանից նորա եւ ոյք սիրեն զնա, պահեսցեն զճանապարհս նորա. եւ որք սիրեն զնա‘ լցցին յօրինաց նորա’ [Erkiwłack‘ Tearn, oč‘ lic‘in anhnazandk‘ banic‘ nora ew oyk‘ siren zna, pahesc‘en zčanaparhs nora. ew ork‘ siren zna‘ lc‘c‘in yôrinac‘ nora]. (Those who fear the Lord will not disobey His words and those who love Him will keep His ways and those Who love Him will be filled with His law). In Vul. the last part of this verse ‘եւ որք սիրեն զնա‘ լցցին յօրինաց նորա’ [ew ork‘ siren zna‘ lc‘c‘in yôrinac‘ nora] is in verse 19 as it appears in LXX and other Arm. texts. Here Os. translates ‘անհնազանդք’ [anhnazandk‘] although the Vul. is ‘անհաւատք’ [anhawatk‘] (incredibiles).			
2:16	✓ 19	✓ 19	✓	✓
	It is also v. 19 in Os.			
2:17	✓ 20	✓ 20	✓	✓

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	Os. 20 ‘Երկիւղածք Տեառն պատրաստեսցեն զսիրտս նոցա եւ առաջի նորա սուրբ արասցեն զհոգիս իւրեանց’ [Erkiwłacḳ Teaṙn patrastesc̣en zsirts noc̣a ew aṙaǰi nora sowrb arasc̣en zhogis iwreanc̣] (Those who fear the Lord, prepare their hearts and cleanse their souls in front of Him).			
2:18	✓ 22–23	✓ 22–23	✓	✓
	There is no verse 21 in Zôh. and Bag., instead this verse is split between verses 22 and 23 with which the chapter ends. Zôh. starts the verse with ‘եւ ասասցեն’ [ew asasc̣en] (saying…), and adds at the end of the chapter ‘եւ որպէս անուն նորա՝ սոյնպէս եւ գործք’ [ew orpês anown nora՝ soynpês ew gorcḳ] (for as his name is so are his deeds). Os. adds the following verse which is again translated from Vul.,‘Երկիւղածք Տեառն պահեսցեն զպատուիրանս նորա. եւ ապասեսցեն մինչեւ ի ներանկատումն նորա’ [Erkiwłacḳ Teaṙn pahesc̣en zpatowirans nora. ew apasesc̣en minč̣ew i nerankatowmn nora] (Those who fear the Lord will keep His commandments and will wait until his examination).			
3:1	✓ 2	✓ 2	✓	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. do not have v. 1. This text is in v. 2 in both texts. Unlike the LXX or NRSV texts both Arm. texts have reference to afterlife ‘ապրեսջիք’ [apresǰiḳ] (so that you may live). Syr. text also has similar reference.			
3:2	✓ 3	✓ 3	✓	✓
	Zôh.‘եւ զիրաւունս հօր հաստատեաց յորդիս’ [ew zirawowns hôr hastateac̣ yordis] (and He affirmed the father’s rights over sons). Zôh. changes ‘mother’ to ‘father’. Apparently it is a typographical mistake as the manuscript that Zôhrapean used does not have ‘հօր’[hôr]. The 1895 translation has also used ‘հօր’ instead of ‘մօր’. Bag. and Os. have ‘մօր’[môr].			
3:3	✗	✓ 4	✓	✓
	Bag. has verses 3–4 in one verse 4. The mismatch between Bag., Zôh. and LXX texts’ enumeration starts from this verse. Zôh. v. 4 cuts ‘փառաւոր առնէ զմայր իւր…’ [p̣aṙawor aṙnê zmayr iwr…] (A person glorifies his mother…) from v. 4 and adds to v. 5 finishingwith v. 6 ‘որ պատուէ զնա եւ ուրախ լիցի հորդիս իւր’ [or patowê zna ew owrax liċi hordis iwr] (…when he honours her and he will have joy in his sons).			
3:4	✓ 5a-6	✓ 4	✓	✓
	Here Zôh. omits ‘որպես որ զի գանձիցէ’ [orpes or zi ganjic̣ê] (like a person who lays treasures) and links the first part of the v. 5 (4 in LXX) with 6.			
3:5	✓	✗	✓	✓
	Zôh. has ‘մայր’ [mayr] (mother) instead of ‘հայր’ [hayr] (father).			
3:6	✗	✓ 8	✓	✓
	Zôh. does not have verses 6–8. Bag. like LXX translates ‘Որ ունկն դնէ Տեառն հանգուսցէ զմայր իւր’ [Or ownkn dnê Teaṙn hangowsc̣ê zmayr iwr] (whoever listens to the Lord comforts his mother) while NRSV reverts the order of the verse, so whoever honours (or comforts) his mothers obey the			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	Lord. Os. v. 7 translates Vul. whoever obeys his father shall be a comfort to his father.			
3:7	✗	✓ 8	✓	✓
	Bag. does not have v. 7 but the content of this verse is under the v. 8. 'որպէս տերանց ծառայեսցէ ծնօղաց իւրոց' [orpês teranċ car̄ayesċê cnôłaċ iwroċ] (He will serve to his parents as to masters).			
3:8	✓ 9–10	✓ 9–10	✓	✓
	Zôh. and Os. split the v. 8 into two parts putting them under verse 9 and 10 with a very peculiar verb placed next to 'օրհնութիւն' [ôrhnowṫiwn] (blessing): 'ծաղկեսցէ' [całkesċê] (to blossom). 'Պատուեա զհայր քո զի ծաղկեսցէ ի վերայ քո օրհնութիւն նորա' [Patowea zhayr ḱo zi całkesċê i veray ḱo ôrhnowṫiwn nora] (Honour your father so that his *blessing may blossom* upon you). Bag. has it under v. 9. Os. adds 'եւ օրհնութիւն նորա մինչեւ ի վախճան մնասցէ' [ew ôrhnowṫiwn nora minč̔ew i vaxčan mnasċê] (and his blessing will remain until death).			
3:9	✓ 11	✗	✓	✓
	Bag. does not have v. 10, Zôh. and Os. v. 11.			
3:10	✓ 12	✓ 12	✓	✓
	Zôh., Bag. and Os. v. 12. Os. translates 'contumelia' not dishonour but negligence.			
3:11	✓ 13	✓ 13	✓	✓
	Os. v. 13 'հայր թարց պատուոյ' [hayr ṫarċ patowoy] (father without honour).			
3:12	✓ 14	✓ 14	✓	✓
	Os. v. 14.			
3:13	✗	✓ 15	✓	✓
	Zôh. does not have verses 15–17. Bag. has 'յիմանալոյ նորա զբանս' [yimanaloy nora zbans] (the words he knows). Os. translates different from Vul. 'Եւ եթէ պակասեսցէ զգայարանաւ' [Ew eṫê pakasesċê zgayaranaw] (and if he fails in feeling...), he also does not have 'because you have all your faculties do not despise him'.			
3:14	✗	✓ 16–17	✓	✓
	Bag. vv. 14–15 are vv. 16–17 in LXX, '...ոչ մոռասցի առ Աստուած' [...oč̔ mor̄asċi ar̄ Astowac] (...will not be forgotten *in front of God*). Os. v. 17 does not have 'your sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather' of Vul.			
3:16	✓ 18	✓ 18	✓	✓
	Zôh. 18 has 'թողու զհայր' [ṫołow zhayr] (leaves his father) instead of 'մոռանայ զհայր' [mor̄anay zhayr] (forsakes his father).			
3:17	✓ 19	✓ 19	✓	✓

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	Zôh.has Որդեակ իմ զկեանս քո հեզութեամբ անցո' [Ordeak im zkeans ko hezowtʻeamb anco] (My son, live your life in meekness). Sg. 'ընդունելի մարդոյ' [əndowneli mardoy] 'by a chosen *man*' instead of by chosen *men*.			
3:18	✓ 20	✓ 20	✓	✓
	Zôh. 'զի' (in order to...) instead of 'καί'.			
3:19	✗	✗	✗	✗
	None of the Arm. versions has 19, neither LXX nor NRSV.			
3:20	✓	✗	✓	✓
	Bag. '...եւ խոնորհաց փառաւորէ զկամարարս իւր', [...ew xonorhacʻ pʻaṙaworê zkamarars iwr] this sentence does not make sense as the verb 'փառաւորէ' [pʻaṙaworê] (glorifies) is active and 'զկամարարս' [zkamarars] (those who do his will) is the object instead of being the subject of the sentence. Thus, it can be understood that it is God who glorifies those who do His will and not the opposite. Another peculiarity is the word 'խոնարհաց' (by the meek/humble) which actually causes the whole confusion to the meaning of this verse.			
3:21	✓ 22	✓ 22	✓	✓
	Zôh. 22 omits the first part of the verse. Os. does not have v. 21 but the content of this verse is under v. 22.			
3:22	✗	✓ 23	✓	✓
	Zôh. does not have 23. 'Որ ինչ աւելին է, քան զպէտս քո' [Or inčʻ awelin ê, kan zpêts ko] (whatever is *more* than you need).			
3:23	✓ 24	✓ 24	✓	✓
	Zôh. 24. does not have the first part of the verse. Bag. 24 has 'Զի յաճախագոյն քան զիմաստութիւն մարդկան ցուցաւ քեզ' [Zi yačaxagoyn kan zimastowtʻiwn mardkan cʻowcʻaw kez] (For He has shown you more than man's *wisdom* is). Os. as in 3:15 uses the word 'զգայարան' [zgayaran] (feeling) instead of 'understanding'.			
3:24	✗	✓ 26	✓	✓
	Bag. does not have27–28, Zôh. does not have 25. Bag. 26 'Քանզի զբազումս մոլորեցուցին կարծիքն զտեարս իւրեանց եւ այնու մտածութիւն չարին սայթաքեաց զմիտս', [Kanzi zbazowms molorecʻowcʻin karcikʻn ztears iwreancʻ ew aynow mtacowtʻiwn čʻarin saytakʻeacʻ zmits] 'For many thoughts have led astray those who had them and evil thought came into their minds'. Zôh. 26 has this verse as an exhortation: 'եւ մի մոլորիցիս կարծեօք...' [ew mi moloricʻis karceôkʻ...] (and let you not be lead astray...).			
3:25	✗	✗	✓?	✓
	None of the Arm. Translations has this verse.			
3:26	✓ 28	✓ 28	✓	✓
	Bag. has only 'եւ որ սիրէ զտագնապ' ի նմին կորիցէ' [ew or sirê ztagnapʻ i nmin koricʻê] (and whoever likes danger will perish in it) as a part of the v.			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	28.Zôh. has ‘Որ սիրէ զչար ի նմին սատակեսցի’ [Or sirê zč‘ar i nmin satakesc̣i] (Whoever likes evil will be killed by it).			
3:27	✓ 29a	✓ 29	✓	✓
	Zôh.omits the second part of this verse. Unlike NRSV which uses ‘mind’ as a translation for ‘καρδία’ while all the Arm. versions translate ‘սիրտ’ [sirt] (heart).			
3:28	✓ 30	✓ 30	✓	✓
	Bag. translates ‘Επαγωγῆ’ to ‘հարուածոց’ [harowacoc̣] (strike) which caused confusion in the translation of the modern Arm. text ‘Ամբարտաւանի հարուածներից բժշկութիւն չկայ’ [Ambartawani harowacneric̣ bžškowtiwn č‘kay](there is no healing for a strike from an arrogant person). Thus, according to the modern Arm. text it is not the arrogant person who suffers but the person who is being struck by him. Zôh. 30 does not give a clearer meaning either: ‘Չիք ինչ բժշկութիւն հարուածոց ամբարտաւանին’ [Č‘ik inč‘ bžškowtiwn harowacoc̣ ambartawanin].			
3:29	✗	✓ 31	✓	✓
	Bag. ‘σοφοῦ’ is personified ‘իմաստնոյ’ [imastnoy] (of a wise man). Zah. 31 ‘ունկն լսելեաց‘ ցանկասցի իմաստութեան’ [ownkn lseleac̣‘ c̣ankasc̣i imastowtean] (an attentive ear will desire wisdom).			
3:30	✓ 33	✓ 24	✓	✓
	Zôh. 33 adds ‘բազումս’ [bazowms] (many) next to ‘մեղս’ [mełs] (sins). There is no verse 32 in Zôh.			
3:31	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Zôh. 34 only has ‘եւ ի ժամանակի կործանման նորա գտցէ ձեռնկալութիւն’ [ew i žamanaki korcanman nora gtc̣ê jeṙnkalowtiwn] (and when he falls he will find support).			
4:1	✓ 1 – 2b	✓	✓	✓
	Os. ‘Որդեակ, զաչս քո մի դարձուսցէս յաղքատէ...’ [Ordeak, zač‘s ko mi darjowsc̣ês yałkatê...] (Child do not turn away your eyes from the poor). Zôh. ‘...եւ մի ... տրտմեցուցանէր’ [...ew mi ... trtmec̣owc̣anêr] (and do not harass) instead of Bag. ‘եւ մի տար տուայտել աչաց կարոտելոյ’ [ew mi tar towaytel ač‘ac̣ karoteloy] (μὴ παρελκύσῃς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπιδεεῖς). Zôh. has either omitted the second part of the verse ‘ եւ մի տար տուայտել աչաց կարոտելոյ’ [ew mi tar towaytel ač‘ac̣ karoteloy] or it is an influence from the Syr. The second part of the verse is under v. 2 in Zôh.			
4:5	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. omits ‘ի կարպտելոյն մի դարձուցանէր զակն’ [i karpteloyn mi darjowc̣anêr zakn] (do not turn eye from the needy) apparently because in previous verse has already said about turning one’s face from the poor ‘մի դարձուցանէր զերեսս քո յաղքատաց’ [mi darjowc̣anêr zeress ko yałkatac̣]. Bag. is closer here to LXX.			
4:6	✓	✓	✓	✓

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	Zôh. starts the verse with pl. 'անիծանեն' [anicanen] (they curse) and changes it into sg. 'յաղօթից նորա' [yałôtiċ nora] (in his prayers). Both parts of the verse are in sg. In LXX. It is pl. though in NRSV which adds '*some* should curse you'. Bag. interestingly translates 'խնդրուածոց նորա' [xndrowacoċ nora] (his petition) and not 'աղօթից նորա' [ałôtiċ nora] (τῆς δεήσεως) to avoid the situation where a person prays and curses at the same time.			
4:7	✓ 7–8	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. mixes verse 7–8 and omits the phrase about the poor 'Եւ առաջի իշխանի խոնարհեցո՛ զունկն քո. եւ խօսեաց առաջի նորա հեզութեամբ ի խաղաղութիւն' [Ew arăji išxani xonarheċo՛ zownkn ǩo. ew xôseaċ arăji nora hezowtеamb i xałałowtiwn] (and incline your ear to the ruler and speak to him in meekness and peace). While Bag. keeps both the right order of the verses and loyalty to the Greek original. Os. like Zôh. translates 'իշխանի' (to the prince) though it is 'magnato' (a great man) in Vul.			
4:8	✓ 7b	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. has only the second part of this verse which he attached to v. 7.			
4:9	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Bag. 'ի ձեռանէ հզօրին' [i jeŗanê hzôrin] (from the hand of the powerful) instead of 'ի ձեռանէ' [i jeŗanê] (from the hand of an oppressor). Zôh. 'մի զայրանար ի դատաստանի' [mi zayranar i datastani] (and do not get angry in the time of judgment). It is not clear from the Zôh. text whose judgment is it: of the one to whom this words are addressed or of the one who is oppressed, as again Zôh. edits the verse linking the second part of it with the first.			
4:10	✓ 10–11	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. 10–11 'Լեր իբրեւ զհայր որբոց, եւ եղիցիս որդի Բարձրելոյն' [Ler ibrew zhayr orboċ, ew ełiċis ordi Barjreloyn] (Be like a father to orphans and you will be a son of the Most High). All other parts of the verse are omitted in Zôh. Os. translates from Vul. combining the state of 'being a father' with 'judgment of the people'.			
4:11	✓	✓ 12	✓	✓
	Zôh. does not have the second part of the verse. Bag. does not have v. 11 but the content of this verse is under 12. Os. adds 'եւ նախընթաց եղեւ ի կեանս արդարութեան' [ew naxaṅtaċ ełew i keans ardarowtean] (and she went before, in the way of justice). Although this verse is in the future tense in Vul., Os. translates it as an aorist apparently referring to Jesus as Wisdom.			
4:12	✓	✓ 13	✓	✓
	Bag. uses a word peculiar to his text 'առաւոտեն' [ărawoten] (go in the morning, lit. 'to morning', which also means to go in the morning or early). Os. translates the Vul. 'placorem' not sweetness but pleasure (հաճոյք) [hačoyǩ].			
4:13	✓ 14	✓ 14	✓	✓

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	Os. 14 ‘զկեանս ժառանգեսցէ’ [zkeans žaŕangesc̆ê] (will inherit *life*). Other two translations give ‘զփառս’ [zp̆aŕs] (δόξαν).			
4:14	✗	✓ 15	✓	✓
	V. 15 in Bag. and Os., missing from Zôh. Bag. ‘Ոյք աղաչեն զնա սպաս տարցին սրբոց եւ զսիրելիս նորա սիրէ Տէր’ [Oyk̆ ałač̆en zna spas tarc̆in srboc̆ ew zsirelis nora sirê Têr] (Those who beg her serve the saints and Lord loves them whom she loves).			
4:15	✓ 16	✓ 16	✓	✓
	16 in all Arm. texts. Zôh. translates in present tense, ‘որ նմա լսէ, դատի զհեթանոսս’ [or nma lsê, dati zheťanoss] (whoever listens to her judges the gentiles). Os. ‘հառեալ հայի ի նա’ [haŕeal hayi i na] (looks upon her) and not listens to her.			
4:16	✓ 17	✓ 17	✓	✓
	17 in all Arm. texts. Os. has first person sg. ‘Եթե հաւատասցես’ [Eťe hawatasc̆es] (If you believe…). Bag. has third person and adds ‘…եւ ի գալ չարութեան եղիցին ազգ նոցա’ […ew i gal č̆arowťean eł̆icin azg noc̆a] (and at the time when evil comes they will be their nations).			
4:17	✗	✓ 18 – 19	✓	✓
	18 – 23 (17 – 20 LXX) Missing from Zôh. Bag and Os. 18 – 19 have sg. ‘նորա, զնա’ [nora, zna] (his, him), while NRSV has pl. ‘them’.			
4:18	✗	✓	✓	✓
	Os. 20 – 21 ‘…Եւ հաստատեսցէ զնա եւ յղթացս ուղիղս առածցէ առ նա’ […Ew hastatesc̆ê zna ew yałac̆s owłiłs aŕac̆c̆ê aŕ na] (…And she will strengthen him and will put in the right way).			
4:19	✗	✓ 22	✓	✓
	Bag. has ‘Ի ձեռն գլորման իւրոյ’ [I jeŕn glorman iwroy] (into the hand of his plunderer). Os. has pl. ‘ի ձեռս’ [i jeŕs] (χεῖρας) while Bag. sg. ‘ի ձեռն’ [I jeŕn].			
4:20	✓ 23	✓ 23	✓	✓
	Zôh. has ‘եւ երկիր ի չարէ’ [ew erkir i č̆arê] (and fear evil). In all other Arm. translations there is a commandment to beware of evil but none of them speaks about fearing it. Even theologically this verse is not right as Sirach himself on other occasions like 41:3 exhorts the reader not to fear things which are evil. Bag. ‘…եւ յաղագս անձին քո‘ մի ամօթ կրեսցես’ […ew yałags anjin k̆o‘ mi amôt̆ kresc̆es] (and do not be ashamed for yourself). Os. 24 adds ‘ասել ճշմարիտն’ [asel čšmaritn] (to say the truth). Bag. does not have verse 24.			
4:21	✓ 25	✓ 25	✓	✓
	Zôh. (χάρις) is translated ‘ուրախութիւն’ [owraxowt̆iwn] (joy) and not ‘շնորհ’ [šnorh] (grace). Perhaps it is a Syr. influence of ‘goodness’. Unlike Bag. which has ‘եւ է ամօթ‘ որ փառք եւ շնորհք’ [ew ê amôt̆‘ or p̆aŕk̆ Ê ew			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	šnorhk] (and there is a shame that ***is*** glory and grace) Zôh. has 'որ ածէ' [or acê] (which brings, Syr. creates).			
4:22	✓ 26	✓ 26	✓	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. 'Մի ակն առնուր յանձին քում' [Mi akn aṙnowr yanjin ḳowm] (Do not be deferential towards yourself). Bag. 'եւ' (and) in the beginning of the second part can be understood as 'so' although he puts an exclamation mark. Zôh. has 'զի' [zi] (so).			
4:23	✓ 27	✓	✓	✓
	Bag. has 'ի ժամանակի նեղութեան'[i žamanaki neɫowtʿean] (in the time of tribulation) instead of 'ի ժամանակի փրկութեան' [i žamanaki p̣rkowtʿean] (in the time of salvation) as it is in Zôh. Os. and Zôh. have 'մի թագուցանէր զիմաստութիւն քո' [mi tʿagowcʿanêr zimastowtʿiwn ḳo] (do not hide your wisdom) while Bag. lacks it and does not have a verse 27.			
4:24	✓ 29	✓ 28b	✓	✓
	Zôh. adds 'եւ խրատ իմաստութեան' [ew xrat imastowtʿean] (...and exhortation *of wisdom*) none of the other Arm. texts has it.			
4:25	✓	✓ 30	✓	✓
	Bag. 'եւ վասն անարժանութեան քո ակնածեսջիր' [ew vasn anaržanowtʿean ḳo aknacesǰir] (and be abashed by your *unworthiness*). Zôh. finishes the verse with 'մի՛ եւ մի՛ իւիք' [mi՛ ew mi՛ iwiḳ] ('never do it' referring to the hindrance of the truth).			
4:26	✓ 30	✓ 32	✓	✓
	Zôh. reverses the verse putting at the beginning 'Զոր ոչ գիտես եւ հարցանենն ցքեզ, դու մի ամօթ համարիր չգիտելն' [Zor oč՛ gites ew harcʿanenn cʿḳez, dow mi amōtʿ hamarir čʿgiteln] (Do not feel ashamed when you are being asked something that you do not know) and then adds the line about confessing of sins. It is unclear where Zôhrapean has taken the first line from as none of the other translations has it.			
4:27	✓ 32	✓ 33	✓	✓
	Zôh. only has 'մի ակն առնուր ի հզօրէ' [mi akn aṙnowr i hzôrê] (do not show partiality to a ruler). Os. adds 'վասն մեղաց' [vasn meɫacʿ] (because of your sins).			
4:28	✓33	✓ 33b	✓	✓
	Zôh. reads 'եւ Տէր Աստուած օգնեսցէ քեզ' [ew Têr Astowac ôgnescʿê ḳez] (... and Lord God will *help you*) instead of 'Մարտիցէ ընդ քո' [Martiċê ənd ḳo] (Fill fight for/with you) as it appears in all other translations.			
4:29	✓ 34	✓ 34	✓	✓
	Zôh. translates 'μὴ γίνου ταχύς' as (do not be *garrulous*). Other translations have 'յանդուգն, շուտափոյթ լեզուաւ' [yandowgn, šowtaṕoyt̀ lezowaw] .			
4:30	✓ 35	✓ 35	✓	✓
	Zôh. '...եւ օձտող ի մէջ ծառայից քոց' [...ew ôjtoł i mêǰ caṙayicʿ ḳoc] (and divisive among your servants). An interesting deviation from the Vul. translation is found in Os.: 'կործանող բարեկամի քո' [korcanoł barekami ḳo]			

Ch./V.	Class. Armenian Zôhrapean	Class. Armenian Bagratowni	Greek LXX	English NRSV
	(destroyer of your friend). Vul. has 'domesticos' which is similar to LXX household/servants. Os. here shows his use of other sources apart from Vul.			
4:31	✓ 36	✓ 36	✓	✓
	All the Arm. versions end here at verse 36 with no significant difference in the meaning of it.			

Comparison of MSS found in Jerusalem and Yerevan in 1927 and 1966

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
18:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. is the closest to LXX. (Զկնի ցանկութեանց քոց մի գնար) [Zkni ċankowt̀eanċ k̀oċ mi gnar]. Neither Zôh. nor Bag. have 'զկնի' (Ὀπίσω). Unlike Zôh. and Bag., Yer. has 'ի տենչանաց քոց արգելիր' [i tenč̀anaċ k̀oċ argelir] (restrain from your desires). The Arm. translation of this second part is found only in Yer. MS.					
18:31	✓ 30a	✓ 30a	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. have only the second part of the verse presented as a continuation of v. 18:30a 'եւ մի ոտնահար լիցիս ի թշնամեաց' [ew mi otnahar liċis i t̀šnameaċ] (and you will not be trampled by your enemies). In Zôh. and Bag. this reads 'trample the person', which corresponds neither to the Gr. nor to Syr. texts. Yer. makes it clear that it is the state of the person's soul which causes them to be trampled. Zôh. accidentally omits 'մի' [mi] (will not).					
18:32	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	The beginning of the verse is similar in all texts but the second part of it has different readings: Zôh. and Bag. have the shorter ending 'մի կապիր ընդ նմա' [mi kapir ənd nma] (do not be tied to her) while Yer. has 'եւ մի հաւելուր ի հանգանակս նորա' [ew mi hawelowr i hanganaks nora] (and do not enrich her repository). The ending is unique to the Arm. text and does not appear in either Gr. or Syr. 'նորա' [nora] (her) refers here to luxury, which is personified.					
18:33	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Similar to LXX and Syr., Yer. version starts the verse with 'Մի լինիր աղքատ' [Mi linir ałk̀at] (μὴ γίνου πτωχός). More clarity is given to the meaning of this verse by the versions found in Zôh. and Bag. texts. They not only advise against making oneself poor but also explain what can cause poverty. 'Եւ հանգանակօք եւ փոխօք մի աղքատանար' [Ew hanganakôk̀ ew ṗoxôk̀ mi ałk̀atanar] ("And do not become poor by collecting from adversary"). Here it is all about the poverty of one's soul and not actual deprivation from possessions. In fact this makes more sense as it					

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	logically continues the idea of purification of the soul in the previous verses. Yer. has ‘ի փողոց’ [i p̣oł̣oc̣] instead of the correct ‘ի փոխոց’ [i p̣oxoc̣] (ἐκ δανεισμοῦ). The verse in Yer. finishes with ‘Եւ չկայցէ ինչ քո ի պարկի’ [Ew č̣kayc̣ê inč̣ ko i parki] (and nothing will remain in your pouch). In terms of meaning ‘Եւ’ (and) in 33b does not correspond with the rest of the verse in Yer. Alternatively, changing the verb in the verse from negative to positive ‘չկայցէ- կայցէ’ [č̣kayc̣ê- kayc̣ê] could solve the problem.					
19:1	✓	✓ 18:33b-19:1a	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Bag. has the beginning of the verse attached to the previous verse 18:33. Yer. has an error in verse 1a: instead of ‘ոչ մեծասցի’ [oč̣ mecasc̣i] (will not become abundant) it has ‘մեծասցի’ [mecasc̣i] (will become abundant). All Arm. texts have the word ‘մեծութիւն’ which should not be confused with the understanding of ripe age but must be read as ‘abundant wealth’.					
19:2	✓ 2–3	✓ 2–3	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. is more loyal to the LXX translation than Zôh. and Bag. First, it has ‘զիմաստունս’ [zimastowns] (wise men) instead of ‘զիմաստութիւն’ [zimastowt̕iwn] in Zôh. and Bag. and second, those who consort with prostitutes are ‘impudent’ in Yer. while in both Zôh. and Bag. they will be killed as a punishment (a combination of verses 2–3).					
19:3	✓ 2b	✓ 2b	✓	✓	✗	✓
	The most precise translation of this verse is preserved in the Yer. text ‘նեխութիւն եւ որդունք ժառանգեսցեն զնա եւ անձն հանդուգն բարձցի’ [nexowt̕iwn ew ordownk̕ žaṙangesc̣en zna ew anjn handowgn barjc̣i] (Decay and larvae will inherit him and the impudent will perish), v. 3b has become 2b in Zôh. and Bag.					
19:4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Instead of the correct ‘թեթեւասիրտ’ [t̕et̕ewasirt] (lightminded) Yer. MS has‘թեւասիրտ’[t̕ewasirt] , LXX ‘κοῦφος καρδίᾳ’. NRSV has ‘trusts *others*’ while Arm. in common with both LXX and Syr. do not: ‘որ...հաւատայ’ [or...hawataj] (he who believes) and thus they stress mereely the personal quality of a person. In v. 4b Yer. reads ‘մեղանչեմք’ [mełanč̣emk̕] (we sin) while it should be ‘մեղանչէ’ [mełanč̣ê] (he sins).					
19:5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	V. 5b is missing from Yer. MS. This could have happened for one of two reasons: it was either omitted by the copyist of the MS or it is a Syr. influence since the verse in Syr. ends exactly where the Arm. text of this verse does: ‘And he who rejoices in evil, it will be (to) his ruin’. Zôh. and Bag. have ‘ըստգիւտ լիցի ի բազմաց’ [əstgiwt liči i bazmac̣] (will be condemned by many). Neither LXX nor Syr. have this ending.					
19:6	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	Yer. v. 6 is a continuation for v. 5 'եւ որ ատէ զյանդիմանութիւն' նուազեալ լինի չարութեամբ' [ew or atê zyandimanowt'iwn' nowazeal lini č'arowt'eamb] (and he who hates condemnation shall have less evil). Syr. does not have this sentence. neither do the other two Arm. versions. Because of its starting with a conjunction 'եւ' (and) Gevorg Abgaryan considered the verse to be incomplete as in the case of the previous verse, but as in the Gr. original this verse should be treated as one bicolon together with verse 5.[268]					
19:7	✓ 7–8	✓ 7–8	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. give a mixture of verses 7 and 8 exhorting one not to repeat a conversation with a friend or an enemy. Yer. has a translation closer to that in Syr: 'մի երկրորդեսցես զբան եւ ոչինչ չարութիւն լիցի քեզ' [mi erkrordesc̣es zban ew oč'inč' č'arowt'iwn liči kez] (do not repeat the word and nothing evil will happen to you).					
19:8	✓ 7–8	✓ 7–8	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. is very similar to LXX. As mentioned above Zôh. and Bag. have 8a united with v. 7.					
19:9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. do not have 'ի ժամանակի ատեսցի զգեք' [i žamanaki atesc̣i zgek] (and in time [he] will help you).					
19:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. have 'մեռցի ի սրտի քում' [merc̣i i srti kowm] (let it die in your heart). Gr. does not have 'in your heart': this is a Syr. influence. In the ending Zôh. and Bag. add 'ելանէ արտաքս' [elanê artaks] (will come out/will be known).					
19:11	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. do not have this verse.					
19:12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Unlike the NRSV which has 'gossip' in v. 12b, all Arm. translations including Yer. have 'բան' [ban] (word), from Gr. 'λόγος'. Zôh. and Bag. have 'ի սրտի անմտի' [i srti anmti] (in the heart of a fool).					
19:13	✓	✓ 13–14	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. has 'գուցէ յաւելուցու' [gowc̣ê yawelowc̣ow] (perhaps he will add [to his sins]/ will commit more sins). 'Մήποτε' (never) is omitted in Yer. 'Արարեալ' [Arareal] (did) is 'զանցուցեալ' [zanc̣owc̣eal] (sinned) in Zôh. and Bag. The latter two versions also add 'զի բարեկամութիւն հաստատեսցի' [zi barekamowt'iwn hastatesc̣i] (so that a friendship may be established). Here Zôh. and Bag. differ from any other translation, giving another reason for reproaching a friend, i. e. questioning					

268 Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan norahayt hatvacner' in *Etchmiadzin No. 11–12*, (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60–70].

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	him is not only for his own benefit but also for the sake of strengthening the relationship with him. This verse is in v. 13 – 14 in Bag.					
19:14	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. has the only ancient Armenian translation of this verse apart from Os. 17th c. version. where the wrong version 'գուցէ' [gowċê] (perhaps) of Yer. is corrected to 'միգուցէ' [migowċê] (perhaps not). Neither Zôh. nor Bag. have this verse.					
19:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓ 16
	Zôh. and Bag. omit 'Յանդիմանէ բարեկամն' [Yandimanê barekamn] (rebuke a friend), only Yer. has it. Verse 15b is under v. 16 in Yer. and the entire v. 15 is under 16 in Zôh.					
19:16	✓ 17	✓ 17	✓	✓	✗	✓ 17
	All Arm. versions have this in v. 17. Yer. has 'ի սրտէ' (from the heart/ in the heart) which is either a Gr. or Syr. influence. Gr. has 'spirit' and Syr. has 'heart'. Both could be translated as 'սիրտ' [sirt] (heart) in Armenian. Zôh. and Bag. read 'մտօք' [mtôk] (in mind) and they both add'մտօք' [mtôk] in 19:17/16.					
19:17	✓ 18	✓ 18	✓	✓	✗	✓ 18
	All Arm. versions have this text in v. 18. Yer. places one more verse (v.20) under this same number: 'Ամենայն իմաստութիւն' երկիւղ տեառն, եւ ամենայն իմաստութեամբ արարումն աւրինաց' [Amenayn imastowtiwn' erkiwł teaṙn, ew amenayn imastowteamb ararowmn awrinaċ] (All wisdom is the fear of the Lord and in all wisdom is fulfilment of the Law). Zôh. and Bag. do not have 19:17/20b					
19:18	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
19:19	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
19:20	✓ 18	✓ 18	✓	✓	✗	✓ 18
	All Arm. versions have this verse under v. 18.					
19:21	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
19:22	✓ 19	✓ 19	✓	✓	✗	✓ 19
	All Arm. versions have this verse under v. 19.					
19:23	✓ 22	✓ 22	✓	✓	✗	✓ 20
	Zôh. and Bag. transpose this verse and v. 24 (21 – 22 in Zôh. and Bag.). Yer. translates 'գարշելի' [garšeli] (disgust) instead of abomination.					
19:24	✓ 21	✓ 21	✓	✓	✗	✓ 21
	All Arm. versions have this verse under v. 21.					
19:25	✓ 22	✓ 22	✓	✓	✗	✓ 22
	Zôh. and Bag. read 'եւ լի է ապիրատութեամբ եւ անիրաւութեամբ' [ew li ê apiratowteamb ew anirawowteamb] (but he is full of impudence and injustice). Yer. follows LXX.					
19:26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓ 23b
	Bag. and Zôh. have 'որ խոնարհ շրջի' [or xonarh šrǰi] (that wanders around [pretending to be] humble) instead of 'կորացեալ է, սեւազգեաց' [koraċeal ê, sewazgeaċ] (bowed down wearing black/mourning), as it appears in Yer . 'Որ խոնարհ շրջի' [or xonarh šrǰi] which is a Syr. influence.					

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
19:27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓ 24
	Two words which are rare in Armenian appear in Yer. version of this verse: 'գետնահայեաց' [getnahayeaċ] (with inclined face) and 'ունկնարկեալ' [own-knarkeal] (not hearing, deaf). Both these words are literal translations from Gr. 'գետնահայեաց' [getnahayeaċ] (συγκύφων πρόσωπον) and 'ունկնարկեալ' [own-knarkeal] (ἑτεροκωφῶν).					
19:28	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓ 25
	V. 25 in Yer.					
19:29	✓ 26	✓ 26	✓	✓	✗	✓ 26
	Yer. has 'իմաստուն' [imastown] (wise man) while Zôh. and Bag. have 'իմաստութիւն' [imastowtiwn] (wisdom).					
19:30	✓ 27	✓ 27	✓	✓	✗	✓ 29
	Zôh. and Bag. translate 'γέλως ὀδόντων' as 'ծաղր երեսաց' [całr eresaċ] (mockery/laughter of face) while Yer. gives a translation closer to the Gr. original, 'ծաղր ատամանց' [całr atamanċ] (mockery/laughter of teeth).					
20:1	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
	None of the Arm. versions apart from Os. has this verse.					
20:2	✓ 1	✓ 1	✓	✓	✗	✓ 1–3
	Yer. has only one bicolon for verses 1–3: '...եւ որ խոստովան լինի' ի թերութենէ արգելցի' [...ew or xostovan lini' i ťerowťenê argelċi] (and he who confesses gets disengaged from imperfection). Both Zôh. and Bag. have only the first colon of the verse, 'Իբրե՛ւ զի կարի լաւ է յանդիմանել քան ցասնուլ' [Ibre՛w zi kari law ê yandimanel ǩan ċasnowl] (How much better is reproach than anger).					
20:3	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓ 1–3
	Zôh. and Bag. do not have this verse. Yer. has 'թերութիւն' [ťerowťiwn] for ἐλαττώσεως					
20:4	✓ 2–3	✓ 2–3	✓	✓	✗	✓ 4
	Zôh. and Bag. first place 4b of LXX under v. 2 and 4a under v. 3.					
20:5	✓ 5–6	✓ 5	✓	✓	✗	✓ 5
	Zôh. and Bag. mix v. 5a and 6b in one verse 5. Thus, first comes 'եւ է որ շատախօսութենէ ատելի լինի ամէնեցուն' [ew ê or šataxôsowťenê ateli lini amênêċown] (and there is [one] who is being hated by all) and 'եւ են, որ ոչ գոյ բանք ի բերան' [ew en, or oč՛ goy bank՛ i beran] (and there are [people] who do not have a word in the mouth). The peculiarity of this last line in Zôh. and Bag. is that it does not explain why it is important to keep silent, i. e. that those 'who do not have a word in the mouth' are wise. The only hint of this implication is that the line is placed before the verse about talkative people and thus forms a contrast with them. It is also succeeded by a verse about those who keep silent only because they do not know when to speak. Yer. clarifies that he who keeps silent 'գտանի իմաստուն' [gtani imastown] (is thought to be wise). This is a more precise translation than that of Zôh. and Bag. texts. On the other hand, if we consider those people wise who prefer not to speak when they have nothing to say, instead					

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	of breaking into a conversation with no reason, then the undefined line in Zôh. and Bag. makes more sense.					
20:6	✓ 6 – 5?	✓ 6 – 5?	✓	✓	✗	✓ 6
	Here again Yer. has a different translation from Zôh. and Bag. Zôh. and Bag. give only the second colon of the verse which reads 'Են որ լուռ են' զի ոչ գիտեն զժամանակ բանի' [En or lowṙ en' zi oč̣ giten zžamanak bani] (There are those who are silent for they do *not* know the time of the word [when to speak]). In LXX the parallel is drawn between the person who does not have an answer (ἀπόκρισιν) and the one who knows the time to speak. Di Lella says that 'having nothing to say, a person remains silent (6a) and is thus thought to be wise (v 5a)'.[269] Both Zôh. and Bag. texts leave it to the reader to realise whether the person who keeps silent is truly wise or not. LXX and English have 'others keep silent because they know when to speak' but Zôh. and Bag. remain loyal to the Syr. text which in common with both Arm. versions has only one colon and conveys the same idea as the Arm. texts (There is someone who talks whenever he should *not* speak).					
20:7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	There are two differences between the Arm. texts of Zôh., Bag. and Yer. First, the adjectives in Zôh. and Bag. describing a person who is a babbler and fool are 'անզգամ եւ ամբարիշտ' [anzgam ew ambarišt] (impudent and quarrelsome) while Yer. reads 'վատն եւ անզգամն' [vatn ew anzgamn] (wicked and impudent). The same adjectives used by Zôh. and Bag. are found also in Os. Second, according to Yer., the person who is wicked and impudent 'misses the time/the right moment' but Zôh. and Bag. have it 'յառաջ վազէ' [yaŕaǰ vazê] (gets ahead [of others]).					
20:8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. misplaces 'անչափ սաստկանա' [anč̣aṗ sastkana] (becomes excessively authoritative) and 'ատելի լիցի' (being hated). According to his text, a person first gets hated by others and then he becomes 'անչափ սաստիկ' [anč̣aṗ sastik] (excessively authoritative) while all other known texts have it the opposite way: a person first becomes excessively authoritative and then he gets hated by others. The hatred gets even greater when a babbler pretends to authority. We remember from v. 5 that a babbler is already hated even without pretending to authority. Yer. MS has 'յանկնհոստ' which is a misspelling of a peculiar word, 'յակնհեստ' [yaknhest] (authoritative [in an evil way]).					
20:9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Os. adds 'անխրատի' [anxrati] and has 'պատիժ' [patiž] (punishment) instead of 'պակասութիւն' [pakasowtiwn] (loss).					
20:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	All Arm. texts agree with each other and with LXX.					
20:11	✓	✓ 11 – 12	✓	✓	✗	✓

269 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 301.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	Zôh. and Bag. v. 11b ‘եւ են պակասութիւն, որ վասն խոնարհութեան’ [ew en pakasowt̔iwn, or vasn xonarhowt̔ean] (and there are losses which are because of humbleness [of a person]). The ending of the verse in Bag. is attached to the next verse ‘Են‘ որ գլուխ ի վեր բարձին’ [En‘ or glowx i ver barjin] (there are [people] who will raise head). This changes the meaning of the verse in LXX where a person will raise his head from a humble state.					
20:12	✓ 11b-12	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	As said above, Bag. uses 11b in v. 12.					
20:13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	In all Arm. texts apart from Os. the verb in 13b is in the active voice: ‘ամաչեսցեն, եղծցեն’ [amač̔esc̔en, ełc̔cen] (will abash, will refute) instead of being in the passive voice: ‘ամաչեսցին, եղծցին’ [amač̔esc̔in, ełc̔cin] (will be ashamed, will be refuted). These would have been closer translations to ‘ἐκχυθήσονται’ (will be poured out) and the idea of the graces being stripped or poured out would be clearer. Furthermore, it does not make good sense to say that grace can embarrass anyone.					
20:14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Os. has ‘յոթնապատիկ’ [yoṫnapatik] (sevenfold) which comes from Latin and Syr. Other Arm. texts have ‘բազումք/բազումս’ [bazowmḳ/bazowms] (many) which is found also in G.					
20:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Os. has ‘բոցակիզութիւն է’ [boc̣akizowt̔iwn ê] (kindling of a fire) in 15b. Other Arm. translations ‘իբրեւ ի քարոզ բանայ զբերան իւր’ [ibrew i ḳaroz banay zberan iwr] (he opens his mouth for sermon/reproof). Only Yer. has ‘Այսաւր տացէ փոխ եւ վաղիւ պահանջեսցէ: Ատելի է մարդ, որ այսպիսին է’ [Aysawr taċê p̣ox ew vaġiw pahanǰesc̣ê: Ateli ê mard, or ayspisin ê] (Today he lends and tomorrow he asks it back, such a person is hateful). All Arm. texts lack ‘յԱստուծոյ եւ ի մարդկանց’ [yAstowcoy ew i mardkanc̣] (by God and human beings) as it appears in GII and Syr.					
20:16	✓ 17	✓ 17	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. lack 17 ‘որք ուտեն զհաց իմ‘ ցոփք են լոզուաւ’ [orḳ owten zhac̣ im‘ c̣oṗḳ en lozowaw] (those who eat my bread are of a voluptuous/false tongue). Only Yer. has 16b.					
20:17	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. has only the first colon of the verse. Os. has a translation which follows the Vulgate. Other Arm. versions do not have this verse. GII adds two extra cola to this verse.[270]					
20:18	✓ 20	✓ 20	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. has a translation closer to LXX than do Zôh. and Bag.:					

270 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, ‘The Wisdom of Ben Sira’, p. 301.

271 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, ‘The Wisdom of Ben Sira’, p. 302

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	Zôh. and Bag. have ‘լաւ է յոտից գայթակղել…’ [law ê yotiċ gayt̔akłel…] (it is better to slip with the *feet* than with the tongue). It is ‘ἐδάφους’ in LXX and that is why Yer. has it ‘ի գետնոյ’ [i getnoy] (upon ground/foundation). Interestingly, the ‘յոտից’ [yotiċ] translation resembles the proverb attributed to Zeno of Citium: ‘Better to slip with the foot than with the tongue’.[271]					
20:19	✓ 21	✓ 21	✓	✓	✗	✓
20:20	✓ 22	✓ 22	✓	✓	✗	✓
	The only difference between the Arm. versions is in the translation of the word ‘ἀποδοκιμασθήσεται’: Yer. has ‘խոտեսցի’ [xotesċi] (will be disapproved) and Zôh. with Bag. have ‘անարգին’ [anargin] (are dishonoured).					
20:21	✓ 23	✓ 23	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. has ‘զղջասցի’ [złǰasċi] (will regret) in v. 21b which is a misspelling or a wrong translation of ‘κατανυγήσεται’. The other Arm. texts have ‘will not regret’ which is correct; the person who does not have time to sin because of his hard work has nothing to regret. It is not just poverty directly which keeps a person from sinning but the hard work which is caused by poverty.					
20:22	✓ 24	✓ 24	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. has a translation loyal to LXX. Zôh. and Bag. have a word ‘յակնառութիւն իւրում’ [yaknaṙowt̔iwn iwrowm] (his respect) in v. 22/24 which is a literal translation for ‘by folly of his face’.[272]					
20:23	✓ 24	✓ 24	✓	✓	✗	✓
20:24	✓ 26	✓ 26	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Zôh. and Bag. do not have v. 24/25b, ‘ի բերանս անխրատից յաճախեսցէ’ [i berans anxratiċ yačaxesċê] (it will continually be in the mouths of untaught).					
20:25	✓ 27	✓ 27	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Yer. 25a has a peculiar word ‘ցանկորդի’ [ċankordi] (has desire).					
20:26–31	✓ 28–33	✓ 28–33	✓	✓	✗	✓ 26
	The Yer. text ends with this verse which shows that it is a later recension than G aslater recensions do not have this last passage called ‘λόγοι παραβολών’. Both Zôh. and Bag. have this verse phrased in a slightly different way: ‘Անարգանք անձին մարդոյ, բանք սրտի իւրոյ, եւ ամօթ նորին կանխեսցէ ի նոյն’[Anarganḳ anjin mardoy, banḳ srti iwroy, ew amôt̔ norin kanxesċê i noyn]. (The dishonour of a person are the words of his heart, and his shame will remain with him). Before starting the ‘λόγοι παραβολών’ Zôh. and Bag. have here an additional verse (see ‘Unique passages in the Armenian text’) which is not found in any other translation. It is not found even in Yer. ‘Որդեա՛կ՝ պահեա՛ զբանս իմ, եւ խելամուտ լեր ի դմա՛ ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, զի եւ որդի հարազատ եւ ժառանգ մեծազգի որ զնախնեացն զմեծանձնութիւն ո՛չ նորոգէ եւ յառաջ բերէ՝ ամօթ մե՛ծ եւ նախատինք է նա հաւուց իւրոց, եւ անէծք նորոգ’ [Ordea՛k՝ pahea՛ zbans im, ew					

272 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, ‘The Wisdom of Ben Sira’, p. 302.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)

xelamowt ler ՝i dma՛ i towê ew i gišeri, zi ew ordi harazat ew žaŕang mecazgi or znaxneaċn zmecanjnowtiwn o՛č՝ norogê ew yaŕaǰ berê՝ amôt՝ me՛c ew naxatinḱ ê na hawowċ iwroċ, ew anêcḱ norog] (My child, keep my words and ponder on them day and night, for even one's own son, heir of a noble family, if he does not renew and develop his ancestors' honour, then he becomes a shame and reproach for his fathers and a new curse). This could be a part of an original Gr. text which has been lost from other texts. Generally, the character of this passage is in line with many other similar passages in Sir (such as Sir. 3:1, 10:28, 16:24, etc.) which allows us to believe that it may be authentic. After the four short poems on silence and appropriate speech (vv. 1–8), on how deceptive appearances can be (vv. 9–17), how one's living conditionscan affect one's relationship with God and other human beings (vv. 21–23) and finally, on the troubles caused by one's own lies. (vv. 24–26) Ben Sira once more reminds his students how important his words are for their wellbeing and honour Then he continues to speak about people who lose their wisdom because of wicked actions. Zôh. and Bag., influenced by Syr., have in v. 29/31 'ընծայք եւ կաշառք' [əncayḱ ew kašaŕḱ] (gifts and *bribes*) instead of 'ξένια καὶ δῶρα'. Ben Sira also underlines the importance of using your wisdom as 'իմաստութիւն ծածկեալ՝ գանձ անյայտ' [imastowtiwn cackeal՝ ganj anyayt] – 'hidden wisdom is an unseen treasure which has no use'. The same style as in Zôh. and Bag. v. 20:26/28 (My child, keep my words…) is found also at the beginning of ch. 21 which is succeeded by another poem on abstaining from sin. The modern Arm. translation of 1994 has the above mentioned unique passage under v. 19:26.

42:25	✓ 26	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

Zôh. has 'պատմել զփառաց նորա' [patmel zṗaŕaċ nora] (*telling* about His Glory) while Yer. and Jer, like LXX or Syr. have 'տեսանելով' [tesanelov] (seeing). There is a v. 25 in Bag. which however corresponds to v. 24 of other versions.

43:1	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

Zôh. does not have vv. 1–8. There are two differences in usage of the preposition 'զ'(z- indicating the object of a sentence) in Yer. and Jer. The latter has 'զհաստատութեան զտութիւն' [zhastatowtean ztowtiwn] (the clear firmament) and 'զտեսիլ փառաց' [ztesil ṗaŕaċ] (the vision of glory) which makes both 'զզտութիւն' [zztowtiwn] and 'զտեսիլ' [ztesil] objects of the sentence. Likewise in Yer, trying to correct this mistake, Abgaryan added 'զ' to 'հաստատութեան' [hastatowtean] and it became 'զհաստատութիւն զտութեան' [zhastatowtiwn ztowtean] where the first word is supposed to the subject and the second word the adjective. In reality there was no need to add 'զ' to 'հաստատութեան' [hastatowtean]: it is the subject of the sentence and therefore it should be in the nom-

273 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grkin hin t՝argmanowtenên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50].

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	inative as it appears in Yer. and not in the accusative. Only one of Dowrean's corrections to Jer. MS is correct:[273] from 'զտեսիլ' [ztesil] (the vision) to 'ի տեսիլ' [i tesil] and not 'ի տեսլեան' [i teslean] as it is the preposition 'ի' together with the *accusative* that gives the dative and not with *dative sg.* Alternatively it could be just 'տեսլեան' [teslean] which is in the dative itself without any preposition. Thus, the corrected version of the verse should read: 'Պերճութիւն բարձանց, զտութիւն հաստատութեան եւ տեսակ երկնի՛ ի տեսլեան փառաց' [Perčowtiwn barjanc, ztowtiwn hastatowtean ew tesak erkni՛ i teslean p̣ařaç] (The grandeur of the heights, the clear vault and the sight of the heaven [witness] to the glory of the vision).					
43:2	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Jer. and Yer. have 'զելս' (the rise) in v. 2a which needs to be corrected to 'յելս' (when [it] rises). Yer. has an older version of the word 'անօթ' [anôt] (instrument): 'անաւթ' [anawt], while Jer. has 'անօթ'[anôt].					
43:3	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Yer. has 'կեալ' [keal] (stand) in v. 2b instead of 'կալ' [kal] (withstand) as it should be. Abgaryan corrected this error in his article comparing it with the Jer. text.[274]					
43:4	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	In v. 4a. 'գոլոյ' [goloy] means 'burning heat' and not 'lukewarm'.					
43:5	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Dowrean thinks that the word 'փութացույց' [p̣owtacowyc̣] (hastened) is a misleading translation and because of this he changes the word to 'դադարեցոյց' (stopped). It is interesting that the same word 'դադարեցոյց' is found in Yer. as well. Abgaryan even corrects 'զընթացս իւր' [zənt̕acs iwr] ('its course', where 'իւր' is a reflexive pronoun) to 'զընթացս նորա' [zənt̕acs nora] ('its course', where 'նորա' [nora] is a possessive pronoun). However, when we look at this verse from a different perspective it becomes clear that the reflexive pronoun 'իւր' [iwr] in v. 5b is correct: the sun, which is created by God, has its steeds which by its order hasten its course.[275] Thus, Dowrean's correction is inaccurate.					
43:6	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	This verse is a continuation of the previous as Sirach speaks about the second 'անօթ' (vessel) of the Lord. Both Jer. and Yer. have a wrong word 'ցասումն' [c̣asowmn] (wrath) in v. 6b, instead of 'ցուցումն' [c̣owc̣owmn] (mark). This is most likely to be a scribal error by the copyist of the Jer. MS, as the words are veryclose to each other in spelling and only the second and the third letters have been changed. Similarly to LXX, both Jer. and Yer. start the verse with the conjunction					

274 Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan norahayt hatvacner' in *Etchmiadzin No. 11–12*, (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60–70].

275 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 492.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	‘եւ’ (and) which connects this verse with v. 5. The role of the word ‘յամենայն’ (all) or as in Dowrean’s amendment ‘յամենայնի’ [yamenayni] (in all) is unclear as it does not make sense within the context of the verse.					
43:7	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. in 7a has ‘նշան տեսանի’ [nšan tesani] (the sign is seen) which is corrected by Dowrean to ‘տաւնի’ [tawni] (of feast). In an earlier MS it could have been ‘նշան տեսանի տաւնի’ [nšan tesani tawni] (the sign of a feast is seen) from which ‘տաւնի’ [tawni] (of a feast) subsequently dropped out. Verse 7b. in Jer. reads ‘լուսաւոր‘ մաշի և վախճանի’ [lowsawor‘ maši ew vaxčani] ([it is] bright, [then it] wanes and dies). The ‘ἐπὶ συντελείας’ of LXX suggests that it should be ‘ի վախճանի’ [i vaxčani] (upon death) or ‘ի լման’ [i lrman] (upon completion).[276]					
43:8	✓ 9	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	As in the Gr. text, both Yer. and Jer. have ‘ամիս’ [amis] (month), which is used instead of ‘moon’. Dowrean corrected ‘բանականաց’ [banakanaċ] (of the rational [beings]) in v. 8cto ‘բանակաց’ [banakaċ] (of the armies). The wrong ending ‘ան’ which occurs in both Arm. texts must be read ‘բանակաց’ [banakaċ] (παρεμβολῶν). Zôh. has only the last colon of the verse ‘ի հաստատութեան երկնից’ [i hastatowt‘ean erknič] (in the firmament of the heaven). The ending of this verse seems to become attached to v. 10					
43:9	✓ 10	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	According to Zôh. the Lord lightens the world with the stars, which are the ornaments of the heaven. First, the mixture of the two verses in Zôh. is probably caused because by the occurrence of the word ‘երկնից’ [erknič](heaven) at the end of v. 8 and beginning of v. 9.Second, in Zôh. the ‘stars’ is not the subject of the v. 9 because it is in plural and the verb in the succeeding colon is sg. ‘լուսաւորէ’ [lowsaworê] (lightens), hence it is the Lord who lightens the world. Zôh. does not see that the subject is not the Lord but the stars (The stars lighten the heightsof the Lord).					
43:10	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	The only difference between Yer. and Jer. is in the words ‘քակեսցին/ քակտեսցին’ [ƙakesċin/ ƙaktesċin] both of which have the same meaning of ‘release’.					
43:11	✓ 12	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Syr. does not have verses 11 – 33. Zôh. adds ‘որ յամպս’ [or yamps] (that is in the skies) indicating the place of the rainbow. None of the other translations has this addition.					
43:12	✓ 13	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

276 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, ‘Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grkin hin t‘argmanowt‘enên’ in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246 – 50].

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	Zôh. has only the second colon of the verse, in which the object is changed. In the previous verse God is the creator of the rainbow. In this verse, without changing the object of the sentence, Sirach says that the hands ofthe Most High stretched *it* out, whereas in Zôh. the object as well as the verb are changed to 'հաստատեաց զխորանս երկնից' [hastateaċ zxorans erknic̈] ([He] established the vault of the heaven).					
43:13	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Abgaryan follows here the correction of Dowrean and deletes the definite article 'զ' from the word 'զձիւն' [zjiwn] (the snow) in Yer. However, both versions are correct, because the preposition 'զ' indicates that the 'snow' is the object of the sentence.					
43:14	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Yer. and Jer. have identical texts for this verse and correspond to LXX.					
43:15	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	'Զաւրութիւն յամպս' [Zawrowẗiwn yamps] (power in the skies) which occurs in both Yer. and Jer. is a mistranslation of 'ἴσχυσε νεφέλας'. Dowrean's suggestion 'զօրացոյց զամպս' [zôraċoyċ zamps] ([He] strengthened the skies) is correct as 'զաւրութիւն յամպս' [zawrowẗiwn yamps] makes no sense within the context of this verse.					
43:16	✓ 17	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Yer. and Jer. have 'երկրին' [erkrin] (of the earth). There should have been 'ե' [e] instead of 'կ' [k] in the second syllable of the word which would then be translated as 'shake' instead of 'of the earth'. Zôh. has 'հալեսցեն' [halesċen] (will melt) instead of (երերին) [ererin] 'shake'.					
43:17	✓ 18–19	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. (17a) has 'զլերինս' [zlerins] (the mountains) instead of 'զերկիր' [zerkir] (the earth). V. 17c 'Եւ իբրեւ թռչունս թռուցեալ արկանէ տարափ' [Ew ibrew ẗr̈čowns ẗr̈owċeal arkanê tarap̣] (and he scatters the shower [downpour] like flying birds). Snow is not mentioned in the colon and an unusual expression is used for the plural 'ἀκρὶς', 'զժողովս բանակաց մարախոյ' [zžołovs banakaċ maraxoy](gathering of the armies of locust).Yer. (17c) reads 'ցանէ ի վայր' [ċanê i vayr] ([He] scatters down) while Jer. has 'ցանէ ի վերայ' [ċanê i veray] ([He] scatters over). The version in Jer. is correct as the verb 'ցանեմ' [ċanem] (sprinkle, scatter) is always placed by either 'ի վերայ...' [i veray...] (over something) or a word in the accusative with the preposition 'ընդ' [ənd] (ynd) in front of it.					
43:18	✓ 20	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Yer. (17b) has 'ի չուելոյ' [i č̣oweloy] (in leaving) and Jer. 'ի չուել' [i č̣owel] (at the time of leaving/when [it] leaves). Abgaryan's correction of 'ի չուելոյ' [i č̣oweloy] to 'չուել' [č̣owel] (to leave) cannot be accepted as the verb 'չուել' [č̣owel] used on its own does not express an idea of time. The Gr. text uses the classic ἐπὶ + (temporal) genitive as an expression of time. Bearing in mind that the gen. used in Gr. with 'ἐπὶ' is 'ὑετοῦ', we ought to accept Dowrean's suggestion of 'յանձրեւել' [yanjrewel] (when it rains), where 'յ' [y] is the preposition 'ի' used together with the in-					

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	definite form of the verb ‘անձրեւել’ [anjrewel] (to rain). Zôh. reads ‘ընդ բերել’ [ənd berel] (at his bringing/when he brings).					
43:19	✓ 21	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Yer. and Jer. follow the LXX translation for this verse. Zôh. instead of ‘ծայրք խոչաց’ [cayrǩ xočʻaċ] (edges of thorns), as it appears in other Arm. texts, has ‘զտէգ նիզակաց’ [ztêg nizakaċ] (tips of the arrows).					
43:20	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	The words ‘ծնծղիք’ [cncłiǩ] or ‘ձընծղիթք’ [jəncłiťǩ] occurring respectively in Yer. and Jer. are unique to the Arm. text of Sirach. They are used as a translation of the Gr. ‘κρύσταλλος’. The possible stems of the words could be ‘ձիւն’ [jiwn] (snow) and ‘ծղիկք’ [cłikǩ] (wings), ‘wings of snow’.					
43:21	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
43:22	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Yer. and Jer. lack 22a. In 22b they read ‘ի ջրոյ’ (from water) which is changed by Dowrean, seconded by Abgaryan, to ‘ի հրոյ’ (from fire). ‘Ցող պատահեալ‘ ի հրոյ զուարացուսցէ’ [Ċoł pataheal‘ i hroy zowaraċowsċê] (The dew that is generated‘ refreshes from fire/heat). Note the ‘” punctuation mark, which is the equivalent of the dash in English, i. e. it introduces an explanation or expansion of the preceding phrase or word. I disagree with Dowrean’s suggestion, as the word ‘պատահեալ’ [pataheal] (generated, happened) clearly indicates that the translator wants to show the source of the dew, which is water, not fire. Thus, when we move the ‘” punctuation mark, we can then see that the word ‘պատահեալ’ [pataheal] (generated) starts making sense. ‘The dew, generated from water, refreshes’. In P. Skehan’s translation the second colon of this verse reads: ‘…and the scattered dew enriches the parched land’. It confirms that the word ‘պատահեալ’ [pataheal] (generated) is explaining the origin of the dew.					
43:23	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	The word ‘ծփեցան’ [cṗeċan] (swing) in 23a must be read ‘դադարեցան’ [dadareċan] (stilled).[277] Dowrean gives a different translation for ‘ἐφύτευσεν ἐν αὐτῇ νήσους’, stating that it should be ‘եւ տնկեաց զնա Յիսուս’ [ew tnkeaċ zna Yisows] (and planted him Jesus). He does not explain why he thinks this, but both the Heb. ʾîyîm (the islands) which has survived only in M and the Gr. ‘nēsous’ suggest that the Yer. and Jer. MSS have the correct translation of the word.					
43:24	✓ 26	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. (23a) adds ‘յանդունդս’ (into abyss), ‘Որ իջանեն յանդունդս նաւուք ի ծով’ [Or iǰanen yandownds nawowǩ i cov] (those who go down to the sea in ships). Gr.					

277 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, ‘Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grǩin hin ťargmanowťenên’ in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246 – 50].

278 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, ‘The Wisdom of Ben Sira’, p. 494.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	does not have 'go down'. A similar translation is found in Ps. 107:23 'Some went down to the sea in ships'.[278]					
43:25	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. has 'եւ անդէն զարմանամք' [ew andên zarmanamk'] (and from there we are amazed). Yer. has the correct translation 'եւ անդ են զարմանալիք' [ew and en zarmanalik'] (and there are the amazements). The previous verse speaks about the sea and its wonders, which is continued by this verse which specifies the subjects of amazement. 'Անդէն-անդ են' [Andên-and en] is a copyist's mistake.					
43:26	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	All Arm. texts lack the word 'messenger' (հրեշտակ) [hreštak] instead translating 'նորա' [nora] (his). This causes confusion in the meaning of the colon as it starts already with the pronoun 'His' referring to God, whereas the second use of the same pronoun refers to the messenger. For clarity, 'նորա' should be changed to 'հրեշտակի' [hreštaki] (of the messenger).					
43:27	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	27a corresponds to LXX. The second colon in Jer. MS states 'Վախճան բնաւինբանից է ինքն' [Vaxčan bnawinbanič ê inkn] (the end of all the words is He). In this sentence two very important points must be drawn to our attention. First, the word 'բնաւին' [bnawin] (all) is not in its correct place in the sentence. Sirach's thought is that God is all (see for instance NRSV translation). Placing 'բնաւին' [bnawin] before 'բանից' [banič] (of the words) makes it into an adjective for 'the words' rather than for 'God'. Second, an appropriate punctuation mark should be placed after 'բանից' [banič] to indicate the beginning of the direct speech.					
43:28	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both extant Arm. texts have distorted translations for this verse. Yer. 'փառաւորել որքան որ կարացաք ցուցաներ զինքն, մեծ քան զամենայն գործս իւր' [p'ařaworel orkan or karaċak' ċowċaner zinkn, mec kan zamenayn gorcs iwr] (as much as we could glorify, shows Him [His might]. [He is] greater than His every work). Jer. has the same text for the second colon but the first colon reads as follows: 'փառաւորելով որ կարացաք ճանաչել զիքն' [p'ařaworelov or karaċak' čanač'el zikn] (it is through magnifying that we could know Him). Dowrean made a literal translation of this verse.[279]					
43:29	✓ 31	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. lacks the second colon of the verse.					
43:30	✓ 32	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zôh. has only v. 30a.					
43:31	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

279 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grkin hin t'argmanowt'enên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50].

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
43:32	✓ 36	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Similar to LXX, the Arm. texts have 'we' instead of 'I' in MS B which, as Di Lella says, disrupts 'the inclusio with 42:15b at the beginning of this lengthy poem'.[280] Zôh. has 'ծածկեալ խորհուրդք' եւ սքանչելիք' [cackeal xorhowrdk' ew skanč'elik'] (hidden mysteries and marvels) instead of 'μείζονα τούτων'.					
43:33	✓ 36	✗	✓	✓	✓ 32	✓ 32
	Zôh. omits v. 33a. changing 'բարեպաշտից' [barepaštič] (devoted) in 33b to 'պաշտոնէից իւրոց' [paštonêič iwroč] (his ministers/servants).					
44:1	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Many of the Gr. as well as Lat. and Syr. MSS have a title at the beginning of this chapter: 'Praise of the Ancestors', or 'of old' ('ôlām).[281] Both Arm. texts have this title with the word 'ancestors' changed to 'fathers' (Հարանց) [Haranč]. V. 1b in Yer. and Jer. have 'Եւ զհարս մեր ծննդեամբ' [Ew zhars mer cnndeamb] (lit. and our fathers by birth). 'By birth' here does not show the relationship between Sirach and the 'fathers' but it indicates that the following poem is going to be dedicated to the heroes of Israel in chronological order. In order to make the meaning of the colonclear P. Skehan translates this colon 'each in his own time'.[282]					
44:2	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Arm. texts follow the LXX translation.					
44:3	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. MS has 'Որք սիրէին զթագաւորութիւնս' [Ork sirêin zt'agaworowt'iwns] (those who loved the kingdoms). Yer. has 'Որք տիրէին...' [Ork tirêin...] (those who ruled), which confirms that changing the first letter 'տ' to 'ս' is a mistake of the copyist. All Gr. and Heb. texts speak about the righteous *rulers,* the ancient kings of Israel and not generally about the people who loved their kingdoms. Apparently, having mistaken the word 'տիրէին' [tirêin], the copyist of Jer. consequently changed 'ի թագաւորութիւնս' (in the kingdoms) to 'զթագաւորութիւնս' [zt'agaworowt'iwns] (the kingdoms). The correct version is found in Yer. 'Որք տիրէին ի թագաւորութիւնս' [Ork tirêin i t'agaworowt'iwns] (those who ruled in the kingdoms).					
44:4	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. (4c) has 'իմաստուն ի խրատ նորա' [imastown i xrat nora] (wise in *his* instruction). The text of this verse omits 'բանք' [bank'] (words) and has 'նորա' [nora] (his) at the end of the colon 4c. The impression is that it is God who gives instructions to these people and they are wise in listening to those instructions. However, the translator of the verse did not realise that this colon corresponds to v.3c, where wise people are 'pondering in wisdom' (խորհէին իմաստութեամբ)					

280 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 490.
281 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 499.
282 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 500.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	[xorhêin imastowtʻeamb]. Verse 4c describes the same people (e. g. Solomon and Job) who gave wise instructions in their works. Thus, instead of 'ի խրատ նորա' [i xrat nora] (in his instruction) the colon should be read 'ի խրատ նոցա' [i xrat noċa] (in their instruction/counsel).					
44:5	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5b in Jer. reads 'եւ պատմէին տաւիղս գրով' [ew patmêin tawiłs grov] (and [they] were telling the *harps* with writing). The first colon of the verse refers to Solomon and his Song of Songs 'նուագս երգոց' [nowags ergoċ] (the melodies of the songs). 5b is possibly a reference to the psalms of David as instead of 'songs' here the counsel is given by means of a musical instrument or music in general. It is interesting that the Cod. Ambrosianus has 'lyre'. Thus, the occurrence of the word 'տաւիղս' (harps) in Jer. MS is either a copyists's mistake or a Syr. influence. Dowrean thinks that the word 'տաւիղս' in Jer. must be read 'տաղս' (songs). I do not agree with this assertion as a mere scribal error would be unlikely to appear in both extant Arm. texts of this verse. A possible translation for this colon which is in line with the whole inclusio could be, 'Եւ պատմէին գիրս տաւղօք' [Ew patmêin girs tawłôk] (and [they] were telling the writings with harps).					
44:6	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	In both Yer. and Jer. the translation of the word 'εἰρηνεύοντες' is 'խաղաղացեալ' [xałałaċeal] (are pacified), as if those rich men endowed with power from outside are also pacified from the same source. The equivalent of present active participle masculine nominative 'εἰρηνεύοντες' in Arm. is 'խաղաղեալ' [xałałeal] (pacified).					
44:7	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. has 'յաւրենս' [yawrens] (in the laws) in 7b instead of 'յաւուրս' (in the days). Dowrean corrected the word to 'յաւուրս' [yawowrs] by comparing it to the Gr. text 'ἡμέραις'.					
44:8	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Yer. and Jer. lack the first colon of the v. 8. 'εἰσὶν αὐτῶν οἳ κατέλιπον ὄνομα' (Էն որ թողին զանուն, [Ên or tołin zanown] Translation mine). Os. 'Ոյք ի նոցանէ ծնան. յետ թողին զանուն' [Oyk i noċanê cnan. yet tołin zanown] (Those born of them, have left a name).					
44:9	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
44:10	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
44:11	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	In order to stress the idea that the 'good inheritance' of righteous ancestors remains for their future generations, the Arm. versions use a combination of two words 'կայ եւ մնայ' [kay ew mnay] (exists and remains).					
44:12	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	12a is missing from Yer. and Jer. 'ἐν ταῖς διαθήκαις ἔστη σπέρμα αὐτῶν' (Զաւակ նոզա կեայ յուխտս...[Zawak noza keay yowxts...][Translation mine]). Verse 12b. 'Եւ որդիք նոցա վասն նոցա' [Ew ordiḱ noċa vasn noċa] (And their sons for their sake) is presented as a continuation of v. 11, leaving only 12b in this verse.					

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
44:12	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	The words ‘σπέρμα’ and ‘τέκνα’ are used as synonyms in both Arm. texts. E. g. in 11a ‘σπέρματος αὐτῶν’ and 12b ‘τέκνα αὐτῶν’ are translated as ‘զաւակ/որդի’ [zawak/ordi] (son).					
44:13	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
44:14	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. has ‘անուանք’ [anowanǩ] (the names) in 14b. which occurs only 46 times in the entire Bible and is made of the genitive sg. of the word ‘անուն’ (name) and a nominative plural ending ‘ք’ (k). This word is used instead of the more common (1269 times) ‘անուն’ [anown] which also appears in Yer. MS.					
44:15	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Yer. has ‘եկեղեցիք’ [ekełeċiǩ] (assemblies) instead of the sg. ‘եկեղեցի’ [ekełeċi] (assembly). Abgaryan corrected this in his article.					
44:16	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	16b in both Arm. texts reads ‘օրինակ մտաց ազգաց’ [ôrinak mtaċ azgaċ] (as an example for the minds of the nations). Dowrean asserts that it should be ‘օրինակ խղճի մտաց/ապաշխարութեան’ [ôrinak xłči mtaċ/apašxarowtean] (as an example for conscience mind/repentance…) which is in line with LXX. Skehan’s translation of this colon[283] though implies that Enoch’s example is ‘for the knowledge of future generations’ in general and not merely an example of repentance. This may be one reason why the Arm. translators did not include ‘μετανοίας’.					
44:17	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. lacks 17c. ‘վասն այսորիկ եղեւ ջրհեղեղ’ [vasn aysorik ełew ǰrhełeł] (because of this there was a flood. [Yer. MS.]). ‘Τέλειος δίκαιος’ is translated ‘կատարեալ արդար’ [katareal ardar] (perfectly righteous) and not ‘perfect *and* righteous’. In 17b Jer. has an interesting allusion to the name ‘Adam’. In Gr. and Syr. translations it is the world for which Noah is taken in exchange. Jer. personifies all human beings in the person of Adam. Dowrean thinks that the word ‘Adam’ must be deleted but in my opinion the occurrence of this word in 17b is not a mistake but a peculiarity of the Arm. translation. Yer. v.17c (see above for translation) does not correspond with the meaning of the rest of this verse: the first two words of the line, ‘վասն այսորիկ’ [vasn aysorik] (because of this) would imply that the flood was a result of Noah’s righteousness and his exchange for the sake of the world. This mismatch between the lines has occurred because of a colon omitted in the Yer. MS of this verse. In reality 17c of this MS is not a whole verse in itself but a remnant of a longer colon, ‘διὰ τοῦτον ἐγενήθη κατάλειμμα τῇ γῇ, ὅτε ἐγένετο κατακλυσμός’ ‘through this (because of this) he left as a remnant on the earth when the flood happened’ (translation mine). It may be seen that the part ‘he left as a remnant of the earth when’ is missing from the Arm. translation and the					

283 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, ‘The Wisdom of Ben Sira’, p. 490.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	conjunction ‘because of this’ is then attached to the colon on the flood, making no sense.					
44:18	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
44:19	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
44:20	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Yer. and Jer. have ‘որչափ’ [orč̔aṗ] (how much) at the beginning of the verse. Dowrean suggests changing ‘որչափ’ [orč̔aṗ] to ‘որ’ [or] (who) but this could cause confusion in the meaning of the verse. If a sentence starts with ‘որ’ most commonly it is translated as ‘he who…’ (նա, որ) [na, or]. Both of the Arm. texts lack 20d ‘եւ ի փորձութեան գտաւ հաւատարիմ’ [ew i ṗorjowtean gtaw hawatarim] (‘and in trial [he] was found faithful’ – translation mine).					
44:21	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 21–23	✓ 21–23
	Jer. (21 f) has pl. ‘ի գետոց’ (from the rivers) which must be corrected to ‘ի գետոյ’ [i getoy] (from the river).[284] Here the River is the Euphrates and thus the plural is wrong.					
44:22	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 24	✓ 24
	Yer. gives a literal translation of ‘εὐλογίαν πάντων ἀνθρώπων καὶ διαθήκην’ (զաւրհնութիւն զամենայն մարդկան եւ զուխտ) [zawrhnowt̔iwn zamenayn mardkan ew zowxt]. Jer. has a better syntax ‘զուխտ եւ զաւրհնութիւն զամենայն մարդկան’ [zowxt ew zawrhnowt̔iwn zamenayn mardkan] (blessing and the covenant of all men).					
44:23	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 25–26	✓ 25–26
	In both Arm. texts v. 23a is under v. 25 and the rest of the verse is under v. 26. Yer. MS has some spelling mistakes: 25d reads ‘նոցա’ [noc̣a] (their/of them) instead of ‘նորա’ [nora] (his/of him), Abgaryan, to bring the Yer. MS in line with Jer., adds to the text of Yer. ‘զնա’ [zna] (him) in 23e which refers to Jacob, i. e. God divided Jacob into twelve tribes. Gr. does not have ‘αὐτόν’ because the subject of the colon is ‘the portions’ and not ‘Jacob’. There is no need to add ‘զնա’ [zna]. The only allusion to Jacob is in the Syr. text: ‘and (when) he passed away he was divided into twelve tribes’ (Cod. Ambrosianus).					
44:23 f	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 27	✓ 27
	There is a v. 27 in both Arm. texts which is found also in Lat., Syr. and Eth. texts: ‘Եւ եհան ի նմանէ այր ողորմութեան, որ եգիտ[285] շնորհս յաչս ամենայն					

284 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, ‘Noragiwt glowxner Sirak̔ay grk̔in hin t̔argmanowt̔enên’ in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50].

285 Եգիտ [Egit] – Dowrean’s correction.

286 Գ. Աւետիքեան, Խ. Սիւրմէլեան, Մ. Աւգերեան, Նոր բառգիրք Հայկազեան լեզուի բաժանեալ յերկուս մասունս [G. Awetik̔ean, X. Siwrmêlean, M. Awgerean, *Nor baṙ-*

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	մարդկան' [Ew ehan i nmanê ayr ołormowt̓ean, or egit šnorhs yač̓s amenayn mardkan] (And he took out of him a merciful man which found favour in the eyes of all people). 'Ի նմանէ' [I nmanê] (out of him) refers to Moses as it becomes clear in 45:1. Neither of the Arm. texts has the correct translation for 'εὑρίσκοντα' (եգիտ): Jer. has it 'գտաւ' [gtaw] (was found) while Yer. has 'գտանէ' [gtanê] (finds). The Haykazian dictionary, however, gives two examples of 'գտաւ'[286] used as an active verb: 'Նա ոչինչ վնաս մահու գտաւ ի դմա' [Na oč̓inč̓ vnas mahow gtaw i dma] (He did not find anything committed by him which deserves death) said by Catholicos Zakaria on the trial of Paul in Acts 23, and 'Գտաւ զնա' [Gtaw zna] (He found him) from the 'Lives of the Fathers' chap. 2 and 11. Here 'գտաւ' [gtaw] is used as the aorist for 'գտանիլ' [gtanil] (to find).					
45:1	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	This verse starts in the middle of a sentence begun in v. 44:27 which describes Moses. Yer. has 'օրհնութեամբն' [ôrhnowt̓eambn] (with the blessing) with an unnecessary definite article 'ն' (n) at the end of the word.					
45:2	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. lacks 'թշնամեաց' [t̓šnameać] (of the enemies).					
45:3	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Arm. texts have 'կատարեաց' [katareać] which has a dual meaning in Arm.: to do and to finish/cease. For the sake of avoiding possible confusion it might be rendered to 'դադարեցոյց զնշանս' [dadareċoyċ znšans] (he ceased the signs). The literal translation of the Gr. 'πρὸς λαόν' to 'առ ժողովուրդ' [ar̄ žołovowrd] in 3c is a mistake as the preposition 'առ' (ar) with accusative 'ժողովուրդ' [žołovowrd] (people) does not have the meaning of 'for' and can only mean either 'towards' or 'next to'. Yer. does not have 'զնա' [zna] (him) in 3b.					
45:4	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Jer. and Yer. have 'սիրեաց' [sireać] (loved) in 4a instead of 'սրբեաց' [srbeać] (consecrated).					
45:5	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 5–6	✗
	Yer. has a misspelling (էմոյծ) [êmoyc] of the word 'եմոյծ' [emoyc] (entered).					
45:6	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 7ab	✓ 7ab
	Jer. and Yer have 'նման նմա' [nman nma] (like *unto him*) in 6a/7a. Dowrean suggested 'նորա' [nora](his) which was seconded by Abgaryan. However the possessive 'նորա' [nora] (does not make sense in this context and the objective pronoun 'նմա' [nma] (*him*) is right. It also reflects Gr. 'αὐτῷ'. It has been suggested that Aaron's name was first mentioned in v. 20 and that the addition of this name to the current verse in Syr., Gr. and MS B has unbalanced the					

girk̓ Haykazean lezowi bažaneal yerkows masowns [New Dictionary of Armenian Language, Divided into Two Parts] (Venice, 1749), p. 583].

287 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 509.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	sentence.[287] This is also true for the Arm. text as the initial word 'զԱհարոն' [zAharon] makes the first colon of the verse longer than the following: 'զԱհարոն բարձրացոյց' զսուրբն նման նորա (նմա) [zAharon barjrac̣oyc̣' zsowrbn nman nora (nma)] , (NRSV has *Moses* instead of *him*.) 'զեղբայր նորա ի տոհմէն Ղեւայ' [zełbayr nora i tohmên Łeway] (He raised up Aaron: the holy man like him, his brother from the tribe of Levi).					
45:7	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 7c-f	✓ 7c-f
	A preposition 'ընդ' (*with*) is missing in 7c: 'հաստատեաց ընդ նմա' [hastateaċ ənd nma] (established *with* him). Unlike other texts Yer. (7d) has 'ուխտ քահանայութեան' [owxt ǩahanayowtean] (the *covenant* of priesthood). Jer. has closer to Gr.'քահանայութիւն' [ǩahanayowtiwn] (priesthood).					
45:8	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. and Yer. 8b 'հաստատեաց զնա անաւթ զօրութեան' [hastateaċ zna anawt zôrowtean] (he strengthened him [with] the powerful garment). 'Անաւթ' [Anawt] (vessel or garment) is a precise translation of Gr. 'σκεῦος' and is in the nominative whilst it should be in the instrumental [with] to make sense within the context of the sentence.					
45:9	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
45:10	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Arm. texts loyal to LXX translate 'δήλοις ἀληθείας' 'յայտնութեանբ(ք) ճշմարտութեան' [yaytnowtеanb(ǩ) čšmartowtean], ([with] revelation of the truth). 'Ոսկոյ' [Oskoy] in Yer. 10a must be read 'ոսկւոյ' [oskwoy](of gold). The same mistake is found in v. 11c.					
45:11	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Arm. texts have 'κεκλωσμένῃ κόκκῳ, ἔργῳ τεχνίτου' under v. 11. 'Պատուով' [Patowov] should be 'պատուածով' [patowacov] in Jer. 11c.					
45:12	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	'Ἐκτύπωμα σφραγῖδος' is translated 'օրինակ դրոշմոյ...' [ôrinak drošmoy...] (example of seal...). A better translation would be 'որպէս դրոշմ' [orpês drošm] (like a seal...) rather than 'քանդակ կնքոյ' [ǩandak knǩoy] (engraving of the seal) suggested by Dowrean and taken from Ex. 28:36. The entire v.12c is missing from both Arm. texts [Զարդ պատուոյ, գործ ամրութեան [Zard patowoy, gorc amrowtean], translation from Gr. mine] (Ornament of honour, work of strength).					
45:13	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jer. lacks 'յառաջ' [yaŕaǰ] (before) in 13a. 13c in Yer. and Jer. starts with the word 'բաց' (except, besides) which is the translation of Gr. 'πλήν'. Abgaryan erroneously changes 'բաց' to 'բայց' (but) not realising that it does not fit into the syntax of the sentence. 'Բաց' [Bac̣] should be left as it appears in both extant Arm. MSS.					
45:14	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	'Ողջապտղեսցին' [Oł̆japtłesc̣in] is a hapax legomenon in the Arm. texts of Sirach. It derives from Gr. 'ὁλοκαρπόομαι' and means 'to be offered as a whole burnt-of-					

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	fering'. The only uncertainty is related to the second part of this word 'պտղեսցին' [ptłesc̣in] as the word 'պտղեմ' [ptłem] is not known in Armenian. Most probably the original meaning of this lost word was 'to offer' or 'to sacrifice'.					
45:15	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
45:16	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Arm. texts have 'եւ յիշատակ' [ew yišatak] (and memory) instead of 'ի յիշատակ' [i yišatak] 'for a memorial'.					
45:17	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Arm. texts have 'ի պատմուճանս' [i patmowčans] (in the garments) instead of 'ի պատուիրանս' [i patowirans] (in the commandments). None of the Gr. or Syr. texts has this reading. It seems that the Arm. translators refer to the breastplate of judgment, which was a part of the clerical vestments of Aaron.[288] An erroneous translation of 'ἐν νόμῳ' occurs in 17d 'յանուն' (in the name). Translators confused 'ἐν νόμῳ' with 'ἐν ὀνομα'.					
45:18	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
45:19	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Arm. texts have 'բոցով կարկութեան' [boc̣ov karkowtean] (with flaming wrath) instead of 'բոցով հրոյ' [boc̣ov hroy] (in flaming fire).[289] Jer. lacks 'therefore' or 'and' in the beginning of 19b and this distracts from the connection of 19a and b.					
45:20	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Comparing Jer. v. 20a with the same colon in Yer. one can clearly see that the Yer. MS. certainly predates the former. Yer. has 'եւ յաւել Ահարոնի փառս' [ew yawel Aharoni p̣arš] (and he added Aaron's glory). 'Յաւել փառս' [Yawel p̣arš] (added glory) resembles the common style used in the earliest translations of the other books of the Bible. e. g., in Ps. 61:6 (60:7 in Arm.) '...աւուրս... յաւելեր թագաւորի' [...awowrs... yaweler t̔agawori] (and he increased the days of the king). While in Jer. MS. it reads 'յաւել ի փառս Ահարոնի' [yawel i p̣arš Aharoni] (he added *to the* glory of Aaron). The addition of a preposition 'ի' (i) here indicates that Jer. has gone under a later recension. Dowrean changed the pronoun 'նմա' [nma] (to him [to Aaron]) in 20c to 'նոցա [noc̣a] (to them), probably referring to the tribe of Levi, and the same correction was later included by Abgaryan in Yer. However, neither of the parent texts of this verse has 'to them'. The recipient of the first fruits here is Aaron and no one else.					
45:21	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	This verse confirms what I say above in regard to v. 20c: 'ἃς ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ'.					
45:22	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

288 Sir. 45:10.

289 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirak̔ay grk̔in hin t̔argmanowt̔enên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50].

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	Yer. MS. v. 22c in an interesting way turns to a direct message addressed to Aaron. It changes the pronoun 'նորա' [nora] (his) to 'քո' [ǩo] (your). It is not found in any of other translations. A similar change from 3rd person to 2nd is also seen in the final verse of this chapter which, by contrast, is common to all extant texts. It is a prayer that Sirach offers for other high priests and especially for his cotemporary Simeon II.[290]					
45:23	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Both Arm. texts have 'կացուցանել զինքն' [kaċowċanel zinǩn] (to stand himself) 'στῆναι αὐτὸν'. The indicative form of 'կացուցանել' [kaċowċanel] (to stand) confused Dowrean and as a result he gave an alternative translation 'ի կալ նմա' [i kal nma] (because he stood). In reality 'կացուցանել զինքն' [kaċowċanel zinǩn] is perfectly suitable in this context if one bears in mind that the preposition 'ի' (i) is omitted in front of it. This is done in order not to repeat the same preposition used in 23b. Moreover, the phrase 'կացուցանել զինքն' [kaċowċanel zinǩn] meaning 'he did smth.' is not unknown in the Arm. Bible: it is used in Acts 1:3, 'կացոյց զինքն կենդանի յետ չարչարանացն իւրոց' [kaċoyċ zinǩn kendani yet čʻarčʻaranaċn iwroċ] (He presented himself alive after his sufferings).					
45:24	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	A rather interesting difference is found between the two readings in Yer. and Jer. v. 24bd: Jer. has 'վերակացու որբոց' (leader of the orphans) while Yer. has it 'վերակացու սրբոց' [verakaċow srboċ] (overseer of the saints). It must be said that neither of these translations corresponds to the Gr. texts: the former translation is entirely erroneous as Sirach would not separate the 'ὀρφανοί' from the 'λαός'. The second 'սրբոց' [srboċ] (of saints) is a closer translation but still incomplete: Sirach talks about the priestly ministry of Aaron and his descendants which was the service in the sanctuary, the holy of holies. Thus, Yer. MS simply lacks an additional word 'սրբութիւն' [srbowťiwn] (holy or holiness) which I believe was in the original Arm. text. Another difference is in the expression 'ἱερωσύνης μεγαλεῖον'. Jer. has a correct translation while in Yer. the object of the line is 'մեծութիւն' (greatness) and not the 'priesthood'.					
45:25	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Yer. lacks 'Յեսսեայ' [Yesseay] (of Jesse).					
45:26	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	NRSV has an addition at the beginning of this verse translated from Heb., 'And now bless the Lord who has crowned you with glory'. Arm. lacks this bicolon. Yer. and Jer. have 'զի մի եղծցին բարիք ձեր' [zi mi ełcċin barik jer] (so that *your* goodness may not vanish),					

290 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 514.

291 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 508.

Ch./V.	Classical Armenian Zôhrapean (Zôh.)	Classical Armenian Bagratowni (Bag.)	Greek LXX	English NRSV	Jerusalem 1927 (Jer.)	Yerevan 1966 (Yer.)
	thus carrying on the address started in 26a. All other translations, including NRSV, have 'their goodness/prosperity'. Only Skehan gives a different (2nd person pronoun) variation: 'Lest the benefits you confer should be forgotten, or the virtue of your rule, in future generations'.[291]					
46:1	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 1–2	✓ 1–2
	Yer. does not even change the syntax of the colon 1b, remaining loyal to the Gr. text: 'յաջորդ Մովսիսի մարգարեութեամբ' [yaǰord Movsisi margareowtʿeamb] (διάδοχος Μωυσῆ ἐν προφητείαις) This verse is the only place in the Arm. Bible where the name 'Joshua son of Nun' has '-եանց' (-eacʿ) ending, instead of common 'Նաւեայ' (Nawea).Yer. 1e has 'յարուցելոց ի վերայ թշնամեաց' [yarowcʿeloc i veray tʿšnameacʿ] (those who rise up against enemies). In reality it should be the opposite: it is not the enemies but Joshua who takes vengeance on the enemies that rise against Israel. None of the extant Arm. texts mentions Israel as an object of Joshua's protection because the ending of the verse is lacking.					
46:2	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 3ab	✓ 3ab
	The Ar. versions have this verse under vv. 3ab.					
46:3	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ 3cd	✓ 3cd
	Dowrean translates 'Զի զպատերազմողս Տէր ինքնին ածէր ի վերայ' [Zi zpaterazmołs Têr inknin acêr i veray] (For God himself brought the warriors (enemies) upon). Both Arm. texts though give a translation with a totally different meaning. Instead of 'God', 'Joshua' is the subject of the sentence, i. e. Joshua wages of the wars of the Lord and because of this he is described in the previous colon as one who had no one before him to stand as firm as himself. NRSV follows a similar translation to the Arm. texts. The confusion over the meaning of this verse occurs because of different readings of the word 'Lord' in Gr. text. Some have 'κύριος' in the nominative sg. and the witnesses of that version have a translation similar to Dowrean's, while in some other texts it reads 'κυρίου' (genitive sg.).					
46:4	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

3 Yakob Nalean's commentary on Sirach

3.1 Yakob Nalean

According to Sargis Sarraf-Hovhanessian, Patriarch Nalean was born in a village called Zimara in Central Anatolia in 1701. Another source found in a MS in Maštocʻ Matenadaran gives a date five years later, placing Nalean's birth in 1706.[292] The fact that Nalean's name is mentioned in the colophon of *'Haranc' Vark''* [Հարանց Վարք] (The Lives of the Fathers) published in 1720 – 23 as a teenager who will soon become a seminarian shows that the later date is more correct. It is interesting that Nalean was not renamed on his ordination as a celibate priest. This is rather unusual, because according to a widespread tradition of the Armenian Church the priest's name is changed as a sign of a newly ordained life. Bambowkčʻean suggests two reasons for this: either during the period of Nalean's ordination this tradition was not very common, or the ordaining bishop – Yôvhannês Kolot – himself wanted to keep Nalean's name as Yakob.[293] In a published version of the *Commentary on Narek* in 1745 it is mentioned that Nalean's parents were dead. The above mentioned 4575 MSS of Matenadaran tells us that young Nalean was brought up by his sister who is described as 'Մայրախնամ' [Mayraxnam] (caring like a mother). This would suggest that his parents died long before 1754.

At the age of fourteen, Nalean went to Constantinople – and because he was a very bright young man – he was soon accepted at the Skiwtar seminary established by Kolot. He was trained by two prominent teachers belonging to the Armenian community existing at that time in Constantinople, Gaspar Dpir[294] of Sebastia and Bałdasar Dpir.

The year of his ordination to the rank of priesthood is not certain. Abraham Ayvazian gives information about his ordination to the rank of Archimandrite 'Վարդապետ' [Vardapet] (1728). This date can be confirmed, as in the colophon of an Armenian version of the 'Catechetical Orations' (Կոչումն Ընծայութեան) [Kočʻowmn Əncayowtʻean] by St. Cyril of Jerusalem published in the same year, Nalean is mentioned as a newly ordained priest, 'Եւ յիշեսջիք զբանասէր Յակոբ Վարդապետն նորընծայ, աշակերտ տեառն Աստուածաբան Պատրիարգի մայրաքաղաքիս, որ ըստ գրասէր բարուց իւրոց'

292 MM. MS N. 4575, p. 12v.

293 Գ. Բամբուկչեան, Յակոբ Պատրիարք Նալեան [G. Bambowkčʻean, '*Yakob Patriarch Nalean*', pp. 15 – 6].

294 Church rank of scribe.

շնորհեաց զլուծմանց սորին զօրինակն'[295] [Ew yišesǰik zbanasêr Yakôb Vardapetn norəncay, ašakert teaŕn Astowacaban Patriargi mayraƙałaƙis, or əst grasêr barowċ iwroċ' šnorheaċ zlowcmanċ sorin zôrinakn] (And remember the philologist and the newly ordained Yakob Vartabed, the student of the theologian Patriarch (Յովհաննէս Կոլոտ) [Yôvhannês Kolot] of our capital who through his love for literature granted this copy of the commentary).

Č'amč'ean [Չամչեան] makes reference to two newly ordained Archimandrites in 1728 who in their first sermons had spoken against the Roman Catholics. It might be implied that one of those Archmandrites was Haroutioun Palation and the other was Yakob Nalean, who in his later sermons as well in his commentaries, especially on Sirach, speaks against Catholics and their proselytising attempts within the Armenian community of Constantinople.

The first time Nalean is mentioned as a bishop is in a MS in the Galatia depository under the number 110. [296] The title of the MS is 'Խաբէութիւն Աշխարհի' [Xabêowtiwn Ašxarhi] (The Deception of the World) and the colophon makes it clear that the translation of the work is made by Łukas Xarberdac'i [Ղուկաս Խարբերդացի] with sponsorship of Yôvhannês Kolot [Յովհաննէս Կոլոտ] by the mediation of Bishop Yakob: 'Միջնորդութեամբ Յակովբ Աստուածաբան վարդապետի եւ եպիսկոպոսի աշակերտի նոյնոյ վեհալուստեր պատրիարգի' [Mijnordowteamb Yakovb Astowacaban vardapeti ew episkoposi ašakerti noynoy vehalowster patriargi] (With intervention of the theologian archimandrite and bishop Yakob, the student of the eminent Patriarch [Kolot]).

Apparently Nalean's fame was so widespread that when a close friend of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Hanna, died, the Patriarch of Constantinople sent Yakob Nalean to Jerusalem to comfort the mourning Patriarch. In his letter addressed to Grigor Šłtayakir (Գրիգոր Շղթայակիր) [the Chainbearer], Patriarch Yôvhannês Kolot [Յովհաննէս Կոլոտ] writes,

> Եւ յերկուշաբթին մեռելոցի ի մէջ հրաշազան սրբոյ տաճարիս Տեառն, զհրամայեալն քո կատարածի Աստուծով 'ի ժամ սրբոյ Պատարագին յայտնի ծանուցմամբ եւ յանձնեցի զտեղւոյդ հոգսն որ վասն սրբոյ տանս' ի սիրելի որդին մեր Յակոբ Աստուածաբան Վարդապետն եւ ամենեքին հաճեցան եւ

295 Կիւրեղ Երուսաղեմացի, Կոչումն ընծայութեան [Kiwreł Erowsałemac'i, *Koč'owmn əncayutean* [Cathechetical Orations] (Constantinople, 1728), p. 142].

296 Բաբկեն Աթոռակից Կաթողիկոս, Յուցակ Ձեռագրաց Ղալաթիոյ Ազգային Մատենադարանի Հայոց [Babken At'orakic' Kat'ołikos, *C'owc'ak Jeŕagrac' Łalat'ioy Azgayin Matenadarani Hayoc'* [Catalogue of the MSS of the Armenian National Library of Ghalatia] (Antelias, 1961), column 712].

հաւանեցան զոր Տէրն իւրն կարողութիւն տացէ եւ ահա Աստուծով յղեցաք զցանկալի որդին մեր‘ առ ի յոժանդակ քեզ թէպէտ Տէր է յոյս քո եւ մեր’,[297]

Ew yerkowšabt̒in meřeloċi i mêǰ hrašazan srboy tačaris Teaŕn, zhramayealn ǩo kataraci Astowcov ’i žam srboy Pataragin yaytni canowċmamb ew yanjneċi ztełwoyd hogsn or vasn srboy tans‘ i sireli ordin mer Yakob Astowacaban Vardapetn ew amenet̒in hačeċan ew hawaneċan zor Têrn iwrn karołowt̒iwn taċê ew aha Astowcov yłeċaǩ zċankali ordin mer‘ aŕ i yožandak ǩez t̒êpêt Têr ê yoys ǩo ew mer

And on Monday during the Memorial day’s Liturgy in the marvellous temple of the Lord upon your request I gave to our beloved son, the theologian Yakob Nalean the responsibility to take care of the matters raised in the Holy House [Jerusalem Patriarchate]. All [the monks] were pleased with this and wished him to have the Lord’s support. Thus, by God’s grace we sent our beloved son to support you, though [only] the Lord is our hope).

In Jerusalem, by a patriarchal order Nalean becomes the vicar of the Patriarchate but just a year after this, upon Kolot’s death, he becomes the new Armenian patriarch of Constantinople in 1741. Almost all the sources from where we get this information give varying days for both Kolot’s death and Nalean’s enthronement. The first part of MM. MS N. 4575 which contains the history of the patriarchal tensure of Yôvhannês Kolot tells that Kolot died on February 10th, 1741 and on the next day Nalean was elected as the new patriarch.[298] However, the 15th chapter of the same MS circulates Feb. 12th as both the date of Kolot’s death and the enthronement of Nalean.[299] Mik‘ayêl Č‘amč‘ean [Միքայէլ Չամչեան] does not explicitly give any dates but he confirms that on the same day when Kolot died Nalean received from the Royal Court a Patriarchal cope which was the symbol of patriarchal authority. This nuance recorded by Č‘amč‘ean sheds light on this issue confirming that it was on Feb. 12 when all these events took place.[300]

After eight years of enthronement Nalean had to resign. A member of the Armenian brotherhood of Jerusalem, archimandrite Proxoron Silistrac‘i, with the support of some Armenian officials as well as some bribed officials from the Court, and despite the opposition of the faithful, took over the patriarchate in 1749, on the feast of the Resurrection. Nalean had to flee to Prussia where he

297 Գ. Բամբուկչեան, Գրիգոր Շղթայակիր Պատրիարքի երկու նորահայտ նամակներ [G. Bambowkč‘ean, ‘Grigor Šłtayakir Patriark‘i erkow norahayt namakner’ [Two Newly Found Letters of Patriach Grigor Shghtayakir], in *Sion 5–6* (1980), pp. 126–38].

298 MM. MS N. 4575, Ch. 1. p. 10v.

299 MM. MS N. 4575, Ch. 15, p. 10r.

300 Cf. Գ. Բամբուկչեան, Գրիգոր Շղթայակիր Պատրիարքի երկու նորահայտ նամակներ

[G. Bambowkč‘ean, ‘Grigor Šłtayakir Patriark‘i erkow norahayt namakner’, in *Sion 5–6* (1980), pp. 126–38].

served as the primate of that diocese for a short while. In the same year after the death of Šltayakir patriarch of Jerusalem, Yakob Nalean was elected the new Patriarch of Jerusalem but because of uncertainties regarding his security in Jerusalem he did not arrive in his See until October of the same year, and instead appointed Archimandrite Theodoros as the vicar of the See. Straight after arriving in Jerusalem, Nalean undertook massive works towards preservation of the patriarchate's properties in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramla, Hoppe, Damascus, Egypt and Beria.

In 1752 Nalean invited a very influential leader within the Constantinople Armenian community, ała Yałowp Yôvhannêssianc, to visit Jerusalem. While enjoying the patriarch's generous hospitality, ała Yałowp was asked by Nalean to help him recover his throne in Constantinople. Ała Yałowp agreed and, escorting Nalean to Constantinople, dethroned the sitting patriarch and re-established Nalean in the Patriarchal See. The second phase of Nalean's patriarchate started in a relatively peaceful atmosphere. Because of his fame, Nalean was even asked by the members of the Brotherhood of Etchmiadzin to become the Catholicos of All Armenians, but he refused the offer in 1753. Three years later, in 1756, when Catholicos Alexander died, Nalean was nevertheless elected as the new Catholicos of All Armenians but even then he persisted in his refusal and remained as the Patriarch of Constantinople. Yakob Nalean died in 1764 after suffering from severe pneumonia for almost a whole year.

Before moving to the methodological examination of Nalean's commentary, it may be useful to take a look at the overall situation in Armenia and the Armenian communities abroad, which greatly shaped both the theological and social thinking of Nalean's works.

3.2 A Historical Glance on Armenia and the Armenian Communities Abroad Which Shaped the Theology of Nalyan's Commentary

Political

When we talk about Armenia during the 18th century CE, we have to take into consideration that in 1555 for the first time, and in 1639 for the second time, Armenia was divided between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia.[301] Starting

301 Ս. Պողոսյան, Հայ ժողովրդի պատմություն [S. P. Poghosyan, *Hay Žołovrdi patmowt'yown: IX-XIX cc.,* [History of the Armenian Nation: *IX-XIX cc.*] *Vol. II,* (Yerevan: Luys Press, 1965), pp. 207 – 15].

from the 15th and 16th centuries when the Ottoman Empire was established in Anatolia and the Safavid Empire in Persia, the main concern of these two empires was how to expand territorially by invading their neighbouring countries. In the second half of the 15th century, when the Ottomans invaded Constantinople, they sought to go further west and invade Europe, but strong resistance meant that they did not succeed.[302] Instead, they turned their eyes to the East: to Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia. However, as noted earlier, another newly born empire, the Safavid Empire, was interested in the same territories. Beginning in the 15th century, Armenia became a place where these two powers clashed and fought with each other in order to become the sole rulers of the East. Hundreds of battles up to the 18th century left Armenia very poor and forsaken. In addition, each time there was tension between the Ottomans and Safavids, huge numbers of Armenians were killed or sold into slavery. One of the most devastating events in the history of Armenia was the forcible transmigration organized by Šah Abas of Persia in 1604–5, when thousands of Armenians were moved from their motherland to Persia.[303] Historians of those times, such as Aŕak'el Dawrižec'i, describe how Armenians were tortured on the way from Ararat, Širak, Sevan, etc., to the northern part of Persia:

> And they were leading Armenians towards Persia with outrage and abuse forcing everyone to pass the river Araks saying that whoever does not want to pass through the river will be slaughtered. Those who could pass through the river stayed alive but also many could not do it and died, especially children, old people, women and weak ones. By the evening thousands of dead bodies covered the entire surface of Araks.[304]

Another well known author notes:

> Thereupon the Persians were dispersed in parties all over Armenia, where they seized the inhabitants and drove them, like herds of cattle, to a vast plain in the province of Ararat; whence, when all were collected, they were to be marched into Persia. They then destroyed all the cities, towns, villages, and in short every place which could afford shelter to a human being in the country, together with all the stores of corn, wine, oil, hay, and every other article which could supply sustenance to man or beast, not only that the

302 Ս. Պողոսյան, Հայ Ժողովրդի պատմություն [S. P. Poghosyan, '*Hay Žołovrdi patmowt'yown*', p. 208].

303 Cf. Առաքել Դաւրիժեցի, Գիրք Պատմութեանց [Aŕak'el Dawrižec'i, *Girk' Patmowt'eanc'* [The Book of Stories] (Amsterdam, 1669), pp. 15–25].

304 Մ. Չամչեան, Պատմութիւն հայոց: Ի սկզբանէ աշխարհի մինչև ցամ Տեառն 1874 [M. Č'amč'ean, *Patmowt'iwn hayoc': I skzbanê ašxarhi minč'ew c'am Tearn 1874*, [History of Armenia: From the Beginning of the World until the Dominical Year of 1784] *Vol III* (Venice, 1786), p. 549–550].

> Turks might be baffled in their enterprise, but that the Armenians might not be tempted henceforward to return to the land of their birth.[305]

This is simply a small part of the evidence for what happened to Armenians at the hands of Persians and Ottomans. It is not necessary to give a detailed account of the oppressions inflicted by the above mentioned empires on Armenia; of more importance to our question is how much events of the 18th century influenced the thinking and the spirit of many Armenians and shaped the theology of Nalean and his contemporaries.

The end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century was a turning point for the history of region. No longer was there fear that dissension towards the Church could be a capital offence (as it was in the Middle Ages). On the one hand this was a great achievement for Europe but on the other hand it would sometimes become a reason for some authors like Voltaire or others to become 'a bitter enemy of all religious faith.'[306] But as noted, the Enlightenment became a source of inspiration for many nations, and a great testimony and influence to Armenia. We can hardly find anything, from 1375 when the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia ceased to exist until the beginning of the 18th century, that demonstrates the efforts of Armenians to be free, and to have their own country free from outside powers. When the philosophy of the Enlightenment was flourishing, and when John Locke said 'The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule'[307] Armenians were inspired by the Enlightenment to stand and regain their freedom which they had lost for several centuries. As Razmik Panossian notes, 'Much intellectual work was done which prepared a groundwork leading to the 'national awakening' of the Armenians...'.[308] No doubt, some scholars would say and have said that the Enlightenment stood against Christianity.[309] What the Enlightenment brought with itself, was mostly an impetus for the Church as an institution to recover the pure spirit of Christianity. That is why many scholars like Diarmaid MacCullach

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305 James Issaverdenz, *Armenia and the Armenians* (St. Lazarus, Venice), pp. 376 – 7.

306 H. Daniel-Rops, *The Church in The Eighteen Century* (trans. J. Warington, London: J. M. & Sons LTD, 1964), p. 46.

307 John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Courier Dover Publications, 2002), pp. 10 – 11.

308 R. Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commisar*s (Hurst, 2006), p. 75.

309 The Cambridge History of Christianity: Margaret C. Jacob, *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660 – 1815*, (eds. Stewart J. Brown, Timothy Tackett, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 165 – 168.

think that 'the Enlightenment in Northern Europe was generally led not by those who hated Christianity but by Christians troubled by the formulations of traditional Christianity'.[310] At the same time we must take care not to identify the understanding of Enlightenment with pluralism, e. g., everyone believes in what he wants to believe. I would strongly argue that the Enlightenment was inspired by an echo of early Christianity but which came to be misinterpreted later. The great contribution of the Enlightenment, which I have already mentioned was freedom: freedom of thinking, freedom of creating and freedom of desire to live independently. One example of the influence of the Enlightenment is the beginning of the struggle for liberty. In 1677 for the first time a secret council was held in Etchmiadzin with six lay and six church leaders. We must bear in mind that since 1375 when the last Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia ended, the Church had become the main centralized structure which would represent the interests of the Armenian nation. This is one of the reasons why the first council seeking freedom was held, not elsewhere but in the centre of the Armenian Church, Etchmiadzin. The central figure of this council was the Catholicos of All Armenians Yakob Jowłayecʻi (+1680), famous for his erudition and for active social work. At the same time he was known for being critical of the Catholic missionaries of his time who would come to Armenia trying to convert Armenians to Catholicism.[311]

The main purpose of this council was to find out ways for Armenia to regain its independence and for this reason it was decided to send a delegation to Rome, Venice etc., to enlist the support of European countries. Unfortunately, all the delegation received from Europe were promises of help but not actual support.[312] During the beginning of the 18th century many other delegations were sent to Europe, some even with the authority to accept one of the European Monarchs as leader of Armenia. Efforts were made to achieve independence with the help of Russia and three European countries jointly: Austria, Tuscany and Palatinate. Israel Ori, the main political figure after Yakob Jowłayecʻi to assume the leadership of struggle for liberty, made an agreement with these countries and according to this agreement the Russians with their 30,000-strong army would come South and help Georgia, and the three countries would come to Western Armenia, take over this territory in 20 – 25 days and then go to the Eastern

310 Dairmaid MacCullach, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (Penguin Books Ltd: London, 2010), p. 795.

311 Հ. Ր. Սիմոնյան, Պատմություն Հայոց. Հնագույն ժամանակներից մինչև մեր օրերը [H. R. Simonyan, *Patmowtʻyown Hayocʻ*, *Hnagowyn žamanakneric minčʻew mer orerə* [History of Armenia: From Ancient Times until Our Days] (Yerevan, 2002), p. 85].

312 Հ. Ր. Սիմոնյան, Պատմություն Հայոց [H. R. Simonyan, '*Patmowtʻyown Hayocʻ*', p. 86].

part of the country and evict the Persians. This would complete their mission.[313] An interesting detail in this episode, which has hardly ever been mentioned by European historians, is that everything was to have been done with the support of the Roman Pope whose condition was the conversion of Armenians from Orthodoxy to Catholicism if the European army succeeded.[314]

From the middle of the 18th Century, Armenian diaspora communities became very active centres in the struggle for liberation. There were objective reasons for this: decades of secret councils, endless numbers of delegations and letters directed to Europe had achieved no result. The people of Armenia lost hope in organizing anything and succeeding in it. At the same time the numbers of rich and influential Armenians in some diaspora communities had been growing. It is important to mention that it was mostly in these communities that Armenian science, culture and religious life developed. This is why it became vital for the Armenian liberation movement to change its strategies in terms of geography and ideology. Since the establishment of Armenian typography in Amsterdam, several European cities such as Rome, Venice, Amsterdam and Lviv as well as cities in India and Russia became new centres of Armenian culture. Communities were always connected with Armenia through the Armenian Church and through economic relations. Therefore the oppression by Muslims and the miserable conditions of life of their fellow Armenians was no longer secret. Ideas of liberation began to develop among the European-Armenian merchants who, unlike their predecessors were more organized and more realistic.[315] Through these

313 Ա. Այվազյան, Հայկական հետախուզության գաղտնի գործողությունները 1720-ական թվականներին [A. Ayvazyan, 'Haykakan Hetaxowzowtyan Gałtni Gorcołowtyownnerə, 1720-akan tvakannerin' [The Secret Actions of the Armenian Counterintelligence in 1720 s] in *Hayastani zrowćakić* 5 (214), (Erewan, 2012). [http://www.ardarutyun.org/?p=4828] Revised 10. 10. 2012].

314 Ա. Այվազյան, Հայկական հետախուզության գաղտնի գործողությունները 1720-ական թվականներին [A. Ayvazyan, 'Haykakan Hetaxowzowtyan Gałtni Gorcołowtyownnerə, 1720-akan tvakannerin' in *Hayastani zrowćakić* 5 (214), (Erewan, 2012). [http://www.ardarutyun.org/?p=4828] Revised 10. 10. 2012].

315 Here it is important to mention the name of Yovsêp Êmin, who was born in Persia (1726), grew up in India and received his education in Europe. Êmin was sure about one thing: the liberation of the Caucasus could become true only with the efforts of the Armenian and Georgian armies united. Soon he understood that people were convinced that the only country which could help them achieve liberation was Russia. He went from village to village reading the book of Movsês Xorenac'i and reminding Armenians about the powerful kingdoms they had had and proclaiming that it was possible to regain their lost independence. However he saw how unhappy the people were with his 'romantic' project, as his plans were already known to the Persians. Êmin had to leave Armenia and go to India. Going there he gave his entire life to the idea of the liberation of Armenia. Though Êmin had no actual success in his mission,

merchants 'both the physical and intellectual location of identity formulation shifted from the historic homeland to the diasporan communities'.[316]

After Yovsêp Êmin and up until the end of the 18th Century many groups were organized in order to liberate Armenia but none had any actual results. It became possible only at the beginning of the 19th Century to free the eastern part of Armenia from the Persians with the support of the Russians.

Economic

Armenians began the 18th century in an extraordinarily dire political and economic situation. The continual wars between the Ottoman Empire and Persia had weakened not only their own territories but also, and most particularly, the territory of Armenia. The entire economy had suffered, with money and goods being transferred either to the centres of the Ottoman Empire or to Persia. The greatest economic damage was caused in the beginning of the 17th century when thousands of Armenians had been forcibly moved from their motherland to Persia by Šah Abas. Even after a hundred years the impact of that forced migration could be seen in almost every part of Armenia. At the same time many Muslims and particularly Persians had established their communities in the Armenian villages and cities. The only region which remained overwhelmingly Armenian was the heart of Armenia, the Araratian region with the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.[317] After the Ottoman-Persian wars, some tribes started to protest against the Turkish feudal economic system. One movement was organized by a tribe called Jalalis. They would travel to the countries which were under Turkish authority and organize large-scale riots against the government.[318] Obviously their aim was not only to protest against the feudal system in Turkey, but, under the guise of 'protesting,' to plunder the possessions of the countries invaded by Ottomans. There were also incidents of earthquakes and various epidemic diseases which occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries, and these caused huge problems for the Armenian economy. An additional problem was the rise of un-

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he became a source of inspiration for many Armenians both in the Eastern and Western part of the country.

316 R. Panossian, '*The Armenians: From Kings and Priests*', p. 76.

317 Ե. Զոհրաբյան, Սովետական Ռուսաստանը և հայ-թուրքական հարաբերությունները [E. Zohrabyan, *Sovetakan Ṙowsastanə ew Hay-Ṫowrḳakan haraberowłyownnerə* [Soviet Russia and the Turk-Armenian Relations] (Yerevan, 1980), pp. 220–21].

318 Մ. Զուլալյան, Ջալալիների շարժումը և հայ ժողովրդի վիճակը Օսմանյան կայսրության մեջ [M. Zulalyan, *Jalalyanneri šaržowmə ew hay žołovrdi vičakə Ôsmanyan Kaysrowłyan meǰ* [The Jalalian Movement and the Life Condition of Armenians in Ottoman Empire] (Yerevan, 1966), pp. 135–40].

constrained immigration to Europe and Russia, worse than that organized by the Persians.

In the beginning of the 18th century both Ottomans and Persians had already established their governmental units in Armenia. The most important mission of the units was collecting taxes and sending them to the Sultan or to the Šah. Because of the military-feudal authoritarian regime, anarchy, self-will, and bureaucracy were everywhere. Although the Ottomans and Persians were no longer in a state of war against each other in Armenia, Armenia suffered economically, paying enormous sums of money to both courts. Equally, Jalalis and other tribes ceased their destruction of Armenian villages and cities. In these relatively 'peaceful' conditions, Armenians started to think about giving a new lease of life to agricultural and trading businesses. Some scholars believe that in terms of the development of the economy, the second half of the 18th century became a turning point for Yerevan.[319] It was never a rich city due to its geographical situation of being situated between rival groups, but now Yerevan started to take advantage of its location between the Ottomans, Persians and of course Russians. In the 18th century Yerevan started to develop trading relationships between north and south, west and east. As has been noted, in this century, apart from Armenia itself, Armenian communities abroad took cognizance of political as well as economical and cultural developments.[320]

Lviv, Constantinople and New Julfa were the most developed communities. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Armenian population of Lviv was forcibly converted to Roman Catholicism and half a century later almost the entire population was assimilated.[321] Armenians in Constantinople were also struggling due to Catholic Uniate and anti-uniate movements. One of the great Armenian Patriarchs of Constantinople was Yakob Nalean, a pious and humble person, who was against the Catholic expansion within the Armenian community of Constantinople and other nearby cities. In the next section, Patriarch Nalean will be discussed in terms of the relationship between Catholics and Armenians

319 U. Պողոսյան, Եկեղեցական հողատիրությունը Երևանի խանությունում 17–18րդ դարերում [S. Poghosyan, 'Ekełeċakan hołatirowťyownə Erewani xanowťyownowm 17–18rd darerowm' *in Erewani petakan hamalsarani gitakan ašxatowťyownner* [The Church Property Ownership in Yerevan Khanate in 17–18th cc.] *Vol. 13* (Yerevan, 1940), p. 40].

320 U. Պողոսյան, Եկեղեցական հողատիրությունը Երևանի խանությունում 17–18րդ դարերում [S. Poghosyan, 'Ekełeċakan hołatirowťyownə Erewani xanowťyownowm 17–18rd darerowm' *in Erewani petakan hamalsarani gitakan ašxatowťyownner* [The Church Property Ownership in Yerevan Khanate in 17–18th cc.] *Vol. 13* (Yerevan, 1940), p. 40].

321 Հ. Միրզոյան, 17-րդ դարի հայ փիլիսոփայական մտքի վերլուծություն [H. Mirzoyan, *17-rd dari hay pʻilisopʻayakan mtkʻi verlowcowťyown* [Analysis of the 17th Century Armenian Philosophical Thought] (Yerevan, 1983), pp. 42–3].

in Constantinople, their endless fight, and their theological works which were sometimes greatly influenced by each other.

One of the communities which had significant power was that of New Julfa in Isfahan. After the great transfer to New Julfa, Armenians had established small manufacturing businesses and gradually became famous for their highly-qualified goldsmiths and silversmiths. It is interesting to note that while the feudal system was dominant, the main authority in Armenia was the Church, but with the emergence of the bourgeoisie the power was mostly in the hands of merchants and rich Armenians in Julfa. In the 17th and 18th centuries almost all the Catholicoi: Movsês Tatʻewacʻi, Philipos Ałbakecʻi, Yakob Julayecʻi, Nahapet Edesacʻi, Stepʻanos Julayecʻi, Alexader Julayecʻi and Astvacatur Hamadancʻi were enthroned with the support of the Armenians of Julfa, without which it was impossible to become Catholicos of all Armenians.

After the election, a newly elected Catholicos needed to be confirmed by the Šah of Persia.[322] We must also note that every time the Armenian Catholicos needed material support he would ask for it from the Armenians of Julfa. This community had started to have an influential role in the socio-political and economic life of Armenians even before the great emigration from Old Julfa. Aŕakʻel Dawrižecʻi reports that on 14 August 1604, against the will of the co-regnant Catholicoi Dawitʻ and Melkisedek and many other clergymen, Old Julfa elected Archimandrite Srapion from Tigranakert as a new Catholicos.[323] We know also from some manuscripts that for the renovation of the Mother See Cathedral, Catholicos Movsês Tatʻewacʼi asked for financial help from Armenians from Julfa, and the Armenian community there donated a generous amount of money to the Church. Their success however lasted only until the arrival of Europeans and especially British capitalist merchants, who invested heavily in the same businesses as Armenians. Soon, Armenian merchants and jewellers could not compete with Europeans and had to leave New Julfa. Many moved to India and established the Armenian community which later produced famous authors and thinkers of the 18th Century such as Yovsêp Êmin, Šahamir Šahamirean, Yarowtʻiwn Šmawônean, Mesrop Taŧiadean etc.

Through the ages, with the rising influence of merchants within communities, the attitude of society towards them began to change. Involved in the most developed countries in the world, Armenian merchants would become the carriers of the latest and highest ideas and innovations of those prosperous

322 Հ. Միրզոյան, 17-րդ դարի հայ փիլիսոփայական մտքի վերլուծություն [H. Mirzoyan, *‘17-rd dari hay pʻilisopʻayakan mtkʻi verlowcowtʻyown’*, pp. 54 – 6].

323 Առաքել Դաւրիժեցի, Գիրք Պատմութեանց [Aŕakʻel Dawrižecʻi, *‘Girkʻ Patmowtʻeancʻ’*, p. 13].

countries. Because of this, they changed not only social stereotypes relating to theoretical ideals, but also many things in practical daily life.

Of course, to describe in depth the 18th century socio-economic life of Armenians we must try to determine whether the conditions of life of that time created an ideology (social consciousness) or whether it was rather the ideology which created those conditions of life. No doubt, the conditions of life of a society, its material and political situation can have a huge impact on ideology (no matter whether religious, political or economic) of that society but on the other hand ideology can greatly influence the life of a society. It can highly improve its social conditions or it can dramatically damage not only its material but also psychological situation.

Thus, the socio-economic development of Armenia and the Armenian communities abroad had started in the second quarter of the 17th century in Julfa and then continued until the 18th century and onwards. Especially in the 18th century, agriculture was no longer the main source of income for Armenian merchants, but small-scale manufacture producing goods for export and thus establishing relationships with other European countries.

Cultural

As documenting the entire Armenian culture of the 18th century would be beyond the scope of this thesis, I will confine the scope of my research to literature including the establishment and development of typography.

Since the end of the 14th Century, when the great Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia ceased to exist, Armenians, struggling under oppression from the two enemies, concentrated on surviving and protecting the spiritual and cultural treasures that they had inherited from their ancestors. Only three centuries later, in the second half of the 17th century, could a revival of Armenian culture be seen. It was of course connected to the economic development of Armenia and the Armenian communities. According to Manowk Abełyan, 'A new renaissance started in the cultural life of the Armenians, a new movement which in the beginning was very slow because of the political situation, but soon flourished steadily up until the end of the 18th century'.[324] The first question that comes to mind is how Armenians could become rich and create their culture if they were, and had been, under the oppression of Muslim conquerors for such a long time and had been forced to change their faith? Indeed, for some nations invaded by Turks or Persians it was impossible even to speak in their native language. But

324 Ս. Աբեղյան, Երկեր [M. Abeghyan, *Yerker,* [Works] *Vol 4* (Yerevan, 1970), p. 512].

Armenians, because of their reputation for being able to communicate easily and being trustworthy, were respected by Muslims and had been granted more privileges than other groups.

One of the characteristic features of 18th Century Armenian culture is that it gradually stopped being dominated by influences from the East, and for the first time in its history began to look towards Russia, and through Russia towards Western Europe. By the end of the 17th and into the 18th century, hundreds of books of European authors such as Bacon, Descartes, Gassendi, and Diderot were being translated into Armenian from Russian. Taking the lead from Western European countries, preserving the philosophical and wider cultural heritage of their past became an imperative for the Armenians.

On the other hand, European thinkers of this period were reacting against the scholastic methods of the middle ages and would sometimes completely deny the value of the early authors, whereas Armenians would generally accept certain traditions without any critical analysis.[325] Although the books of western authors had been translated into Armenian they did not in general have much influence on the attitude of Armenian scholars towards the tradition of the middle ages. As we will explore later, Armenians did not change anything in their theological or liturgical tradition.

Overview on Literature

Some scholars, finding several ancient artefacts, have proved in their recent research that Armenian literature has its roots as far back as 6000 BCE.[326] But the beginning of Armenian Christian literature is generally dated to the beginning of the 5th century CE when St. Mesrop Maštocʻ created the Armenian alphabet (405 CE). First, the Armenian Church fathers translated the Holy Bible and then almost the entire patristic literature as well as the works of the Greek and Latin philosophers. Koriwn notes that the first verse from the Bible translated into Armenian was from the book of Proverbs:[327] 'For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight'.[328] Indeed, in accordance with this first-translated Biblical verse, Armenians always attempted to learn and to

325 Հ. Միրզոյան, 17-րդ դարի հայ փիլիսոփայական մտքի վերլուծություն [H. Mirzoyan, '*17-rd dari hay pʻilisopʻayakan mtkʻi verlowcowtʻyown*', pp. 14–5].

326 Г. А. Ваганян, *Камни заговорили, открытие армянских ученых* [The Stones Have Spoken, The Discoveries of the Armenian Scientists] (Ереван, 2009), ст. 4.

327 Կորյուն, Վարք Մաշտոցի [Koriwn, *Varkʻ Maštocʻi* (ed. M. Abeghyan, Yerevan, 1983), p. 98].

328 Prov. 1:2.

approach as closely as possible to wisdom. Translating the famous works of foreign authors, Armenians simultaneously created their own literature as well. The works of Mesrop Maštocʻ [Մեսրոպ Մաշտոց] (5th c.), Koriwn [Կորյուն] (5th c.), Agathangelos [Ագաթանգեղոս] (5th c.), Anania Širakacʻi [Անանիա Շիրակացի] (7th c.), Yovhan Ojnecʻi [Հովհան Օձնեցի] (8th c.), later Nersês Šnorhali [Ներսես Շնորհալի] (12th c.), Grigor Tatʻewacʻi [Գրիգոր Տաթևացի] (14th c.) and others are still very important sources for the inspiration of many believers and for the research of many scholars. Armenian manuscripts are highly valued for their academic importance as well as their beautiful illuminations (*manrankarner*). The 15th-16th centuries were not very fertile in terms of literature, but even during the difficulties of this period it was seen as an honour for Armenians to hide and preserve their manuscripts from invaders who would not see the spiritual value of those books but only their material price.

The works of some 17th century authors are important not because of their value as unique literature but because they contain many historical data which are important for contemporary scholars in researching certain periods of Armenian history. The most famous author of the century was an Armenian monk of Holy Etchmiadzin, Aṙakʻel Dawrižecʻi. In his book of history, he narrates some very tragic events of Armenian history of the 17th century which have been noted above.[329] This century was also notable because in 1666 for the first time in history the Holy Bible was printed in Armenian by Oskan Erewancʻi in Amsterdam.

In the 18th century, Armenian literature was mainly concentrated in Constantinople and Venice. In the first city, the Armenian community had always been influential, but with the efforts of the two patriarchs Yôvhannês Kolot and Yakob Nalean it became one of the pivotal centres of Armenian Culture, and particularly for literature. The establishment of a new school by Kolot at the beginning of the 18th Century soon achieved results: new scholars such as Pałtasar Dpir, Serovbê Patkanean, Patriarch Awetikʻ etc, enriched Armenian literature by translating the works of some European authors as well as publishing their own Biblical and theological compositions.[330] This was the century in which Latin missionaries started to preach also among Armenians causing divisions within the community. Because of this, reading almost all the books of the

329 Cf. Առաքել Դաւրիժեցի, Գիրք Պատմութեանց [Aṙakʻel Dawrižecʻi, *'Girkʻ Patmowtʻeancʻ'*].

330 Ե. Դուրեան, Պատմութիւն Հայ Մատենագրութեան. Ի վաղ ժամանակաց մինչև մեր օրերն [E. Dowrean, *Patmowtʻiwn Hay Matenagrowtʻean, I Vał Žamanakaċ Minčʻew Mer Ôrern* [History of the Armenian Bibliography, From the Early Times until Our Days] (Constantinople, 1885), pp. 89–95].

above-mentioned scholars, one can see the explicit affirmation of Armenian Church doctrines. In the 18th century, one of the most important events was the establishment of the Mechitarist Armenian Catholic community in Venice, San Lazzaro island. Through their tireless service they laid the foundation of modern Armenian literature,

> Their inspiration was also partly derived from the Western Classics, old and contemporary, which the Mechitarists so diligently read and translated. The Mekhistarists employed Classical Armenian in their writings, which gave rise to Classicism as the earliest phase in the history of modern Armenian Literature.[331]

Having been educated in the best European universities, the Mechitarist fathers brought a rebirth not only to Armenian literature but to the entire culture. At the same time they preserved their national identity, publishing many manuscripts of the early Armenian Church fathers. Over the previous two or three centuries, the Armenian language had been greatly influenced by the Turkish and Persian languages. One of the first actions of many Mechitarist authors at the beginning of the 18th century was to purify the language from these foreign influences.[332] One of the great achievements of the Mechitarist fathers was creating the '*Haykazean bařaran*'[333] (Armenian Dictionary) in two volumes. Mxitʻar Sebastacʻi, the founder of the congregation and the other three co-authors of this dictionary Gabriel Awetikʻean, Xačʻatowr Siwrmêlean and Mkrtičʻ Awgerean examined all the known Armenian manuscripts and books written between the 5th and 18th centuries to compile the entries of their masterpiece.[334] With its 51,000 words it has become the greatest ever known dictionary of the Armenian language.

Another remarkable work of this community was the book called '*History of Armenia*' in three volumes by Archimandrite Mikʻayêl Čʻamčʻean. This work became very famous not only among Armenians but also foreigners. Soon, because of his important contribution Mikʻayêl Čʻamčʻean was called 'the Second Father of the Armenian history' after Movsês Xorenacʻi. Čʻamčʻean's work contains the

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331 Kevork Bardakjian, *The Mechitarist contributions to Armenian culture and scholarship* (USA: Harvard College Library Press, 1976), p. 12.

332 Ե. Դուրեան, Պատմութիւն Հայ Մատենագրութեան. Ի վաղ ժամանակաց մինչև մեր օրերն [E. Dowrean, '*Patmowťiwn Hay Matenagrowťean, I Vał Žamanakać Minčʻew Mer Ôrern*' pp. 86–7].

333 Գ. Աւետիքեան, Խ. Սիւրմէլեան, Մ. Աւգերեան, Նոր բառգիրք Հայկազեան լեզուի բաժանեալ յերկուս մասունս [G. Awetiǩean, X. Siwrmêlean, M. Awgerean, *Nor bařgirǩ Haykazean lezowi bažaneal yerkows masowns* (Venice, 1749)].

334 Գ. Աւետիքեան, Խ. Սիւրմէլեան, Մ. Աւգերեան, Նոր բառգիրք Հայկազեան լեզուի [G. Awetiǩean, X. Siwrmêlean, M. Awgerean, '*Nor bařgirǩ Haykazean lezowi*', Prologue].

history from the Creation of Adam and Eve until the year 1784. The contributions of the Mechitarists based in Venice and Vienna, particularly to biblical studies, will be noted below (information on other fathers whose works are still highly valued among biblical scholars will also be detailed).

Typography

One of the most remarkable phenomena of the later cultural history of Armenia was the establishment and development of Armenian typography in 16th century Venice.[335] Immediately afterwards, many Armenian merchants and clergy became very interested in publishing books. Because of the politically unstable situation in Armenia, these books were first published abroad. In the 17th century many new printing houses were established in other European cities like Lviv and Livorno as well as in New Julfa. Amsterdam became a very famous centre of Armenian typography, because it was here that for the first time in history the Holy Bible was published in the Armenian language. However, it was difficult to develop Armenian typography in European countries because the Armenian population was not large enough to create a viable market for Armenian books in these countries. That is why in the 18th century almost the entire Armenian publishing industry was concentrated in Constantinople. Yakob Nalean became one of the key figures who established printing houses in the city. Although he managed during his life to publish some of his books, he did not publish his interpretation of the book of Sirach.

Finally, in 1771 the first printing house was opened in Armenia itself with the efforts of the Catholicos of All Armenians, Simeon Erewancʻi. Soon after its opening, hundreds of theological, philosophical, historical as well as scientific books were published there. Simeon Erewancʻi himself was highly educated: his work called '*Jambr*' is very useful for those scholars who are interested in 18th Century Armenia, its culture and economy.

It is without doubt that further research into 18th century Armenia and the diaspora communities would provide more in-depth understanding of the motives and the background which contoured the theological works of the authors of the same century. Constant wars and a daily struggle for the preservation of national identity became an intrinsic part of almost every poem and prose work published either in Etchmiadzin, Constantinople or elsewhere. Yakob Na-

335 In 1512, the first time in the history of Armenia, Yakob Mełapart [Յակոբ Մեղապարտ] published a prayerbook in Armenian, called 'Owrbatʻagirkʻ' (ՈՒրբաթագիրք) [The Book of Friday].

lean was one of the Armenian leaders and authors whose voice against the ruling injustice could be heard through his theological, biblical or mere secular compositions.

3.3 Nalean in Literature and His Commentary

Yakob Nalean was one of the most prominent Armenian authors of the 18th century. His works are famous not only for their spiritual and ecclesiastical value but also for their abundance. Especially noteworthy are his two commentaries: first, on the Book of Lamentation by St. Gregory of Narek (Grigor Narekac'i) and second, on the Book of Sirach, the examination of which forms part of the present work. With this in mind, we must note that Nalean's works have not yet been given much-needed attention by scholars.

There are a few articles and only two monographs which convey some information about this prominent author. The first of the two monographs was written by Vardan Demirjian, a bishop from Antelias, and was never published. The second, by Gevorg Bambowkč'ean, was published in 1980. Apart from these, some other works by various authors have touched upon the subject of Nalean's biography and the general history of Constantinople in his times. The most important works for the study of Nalean's biography are: the third volume of Mik'aêl Č'amč'ean's 'History of Armenia'[336] and a book of chronology of Jerusalem written in the second half of the 19th century[337] by Astowacatowr Hovhanissian in which the latter examines some details concerning the relationship between the two sees of Constantinople and Jerusalem. Hovhanissian discusses in particular the role of Yakob Nalean in the regulation of those relations. An article called 'About the life of Patriarch Nalean'[338] was published in '*Arevelyan mamul*' by Abraham Ayvazyan which is a brief introduction to Nalean's life. A relatively major work was produced by Małakia Ormanean who in his '*Azgapatowm*'[339] gives valuable information about Nalean and the situation of Constan-

336 Մ. Չամչեան, Պատմութիւն հայոց [M. Č'amč'ean, '*Patmowt'iwn hayoc'*' [History of Armenia] (Venice, 1786)].

337 Ա. Հովհաննիսեան, Ժամանակագրական պատմութիւն Սուրբ Երուսաղէմի [A. Hovhanissian, *Žamanakagrakan patmowtiwn Sowrb Erowsałemi* [Chronological History of Holy Jerusalem], *Vol. 2* (Jerusalem, 1860)].

338 Ա. Այվազիան, Պատրիարք Նալեանի կեանքէն [A. Ayvazian, 'Patriarch Naleani keank'ên' [From the Life of Patriarch Nalean] in *Arevelyan Mamul* (Izmir, 1894)].

339 Մ. Օրմանեան, Ազգապատում [M. Ormanean, *Azgapatowm* [Story of the Nation] *Vol. III* (Beirut, 1961)].

tinople in the first half of the 18th century. In addition to these, others have published relatively shorter articles with fragmentary information: including Mkrtič' Aławnowni,[340] Grigor Basmač'ian,[341] etc.

Yakob Nalean gave a new lease of life to the educational, spiritual and cultural movement established by his teacher and mentor Yôvhannês Kolot. Šnorhk' Galowstian in his preface to the book of G. Bambowkč'ean notes the similarities in the relationship between Nalean and Kolot with that of Plato and Socrates,

> Socrates, says the Patriarch, has never written anything: instead he always spoke and gave sermons. It was Plato who through his works has passed the philosophical thoughts of the former putting it through his own prism first. In the same way Patriarch Kolot was so much occupied with teaching, preaching and with the routine patriarchal duties that he had no time for writing any books apart from some prefaces in the books translated by his order.[342]

Nalean not only continued the work of his teacher but elevated it to a new level. During his lifetime, Nalean published eight of his own works, one more was published after his death. The last published work of Nalean is the one titled '*Hogevor zrowyc'ner*' (Spiritual conversations) published by Gevorkian Theological Seminary in 2013. There are still 15 works which are in MSS, including the commentary on Sirach, which in my view is his masterpiece. Bambowkč'ean gives the names of four places where these MSS are kept: Yerevan Matenadaran, Jerusalem Library, the MS depository of the Holy Saviour monastery in New Julfa and Istanbul library of the Armenian MSS. There is one more place to add to this list: the depository of the Vienna Mechitarist fathers where I worked on a MS containing the commentary on the 13th chapter of Sirach.[343]

3.4 The Twelve MSS of Nalean's Commentary

There are only twelve MSS of this work in the world, of which five are kept in Mesrop Maštos' Matenadaran in Yerevan:

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340 Մ. Աղաւնունի, Միաբանք և այցելուք Հայ Երուսաղեմի [M. Aławnowni, *Miabank ew ayc'eluk' Hay Erowsałemi* [The Members of the Brotherhood and the Visitors of the Armenian Jerusalem] (Jerusalem, 1929)].

341 Կ. Բասմաջեան, Հիշատակարան [G. Basmač'ian, *Hišatakaran* [Colophon] (Paris, 1908)].

342 Գ. Բամբուկչեան, Յակոբ Պատրիարք Նալեան [G. Bambowkč'ean, '*Yakob Patriarch Nalean*', p. 10.

343 Vienna 628, 1821, pp. 2a-46b].

1. MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, pp. 4r-960v.
2. MM. MS N. 1016, 18th c., pp. 18r- 339v.
3. MM. MS N. 1015, 19th c., pp. 3r-170v.
4. MM. MSS N. 6208 – 09, Vols I-II, 1813 -1822, pp. 5v-408r, 1v-308r.
5. MM. MSS N. 4863, 1858, pp. 1r-52r.

Five other MSS are in the library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem:

6. Jer.SJ MS N. 44, 1771, pp. 1r-1164v.
7. Jer.SJ MS N. 106, 1764, pp. 11r-1908r (this is the oldest dated MS of Nalean's work).
8. Jer.SJ MS N. 36, 18th c., pp. 1r-1118v.
9. Jer.SJ MS N. 140, 1811, pp. 1r-1168v.
10. Jer.SJ MS N. 65, (Not dated), pp. 1r-1422v.

Another two MSS are kept in the library of the Mechitarist monastery in Vienna:

1. comma MS N. 628, 1821, pp. 2r-46v.
2. comma MS N. 1052, 1823, pp. 4r-895r

Short Descriptions of the MSS

MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, pp. 4r-960v – This is the MS that I have mostly used in this work when referring to Nalean's commentary. It is the only one among the five MSS in the Matenadaran library which contains Nalean's commentary on the entire book of Ben-Sira. Nalean's commentary on the first ten chapters of Sirach can be characterised as follows. His comment on each chapter consists of just one sentence, and the unique point in this is that each sentence is a short exhortation addressed to the reader.[344] With these lines, Nalean transforms his commentary from a mere interpretation into one integrated homily which has as its aim to transform its readers into perfect and happy people through fearing God and seeking wisdom.

MM. MS N. 1016, 18th c., pp. 18v- 339v – contains the commentary on chapters 1 – 14. It starts with some brief information about the history of the incorporation of this text into the canon.

MM. MS N. 1015, 19th c., pp. 3r-170v – contains the commentary on chapters 1 – 9 of Ben-Sira. As in MS M.M. 1014, each chapter of MS 1015 starts with a brief rubric in which the following chapter is summarized. Then, Nalean explains verse by verse the commentary. However, the most fascinating and somewhat pe-

344 This approach extends only to the first ten chapters. For this reason, I have chosen to concentrate primarily on these chapters.

culiar issue with this MS is that on the back cover page of it the following memorial script is written, 'Գրիգորի մերոյ Լուսաւորչին մեկնութիւն Սիրաքայ', (The Commentary on the Book of Ben-Sira by our Gregory the Illuminator). It is highly unlikely that the first Catholicos of All Armenians St. Gregory the Illuminator wrote a commentary on Sirach as found in the Matenadaran MS 1015. St. Gregory has not written any commentaries on any of the biblical texts and thus, we can assume that the inscription on the cover page of the aforementioned MS is erroneous.

MM. MSS N. 6208 – 09, 19th c. pp. 5v-408r; 1v-308r – Contains an abbreviated version of Nalean's commentary.

MM. MS N. 4863, 1858, pp. 1r-52r. – This is a slightly more expanded version of the one-line commentary.

Jer.SJ MS N. 44, 1771, pp 1r-1148v – Contains an abbreviated version of the entire commentary.

Jer.SJ MS N. 106, 1764, pp. 11r-1908r – This copy in two volumes is almost identical to MM MS N. 1014 of Yerevan and is considered as the oldest extant MS of the Commentary.

Apart from the commentary itself the MS contains also a poem written by Yesayi Notary[345] and dedicated to the Book of Sirach and to Nalean's Commentary. In the beginning of the first volume there are some thirty eight pages (pp. 24 – 28 are blank) enumerated with Armenian letters which contain some beautiful sayings by Yakob Nalean based on the text of Sirach. Bellow I present some of those sayings:

- Խորհուրդ ծերոց, և գործք երիտասարդաց: [Xorhowrd ceroc̣, ew gorcǩ eritasardac̣] (The council of the elders and the acts of the youth).
- Գողեցկութիւն և ողջախոհութիւն ընդ միմեանս ունին պատերազմ մեծ: [Gołeċkowtiwn ew ołǰaxohowtiwn ənd mimeans ownin paterazm mec] (Beauty and continence have a great fight between each other).
- Որովայն մարդկան վատ խորհրդական:[Orovayn mardkan vat xorhrdakan] (Stomach is a bad councilor to the humans).
- Որ որոնէ բազում պատիւ, յոյժ սակաւուն լինի արժան: [Or oronê bazowm patiw, yoyž sakawown lini aržan](Those who seek great honour will earn the least of it).
- Յաճախութիւնն ծնանի զտաղտկութիւն: [Yačaxowtiwnn cnani ztałtkowtiwn] (Frequency gives birth to weariness).

345 Nothing is known about Yesayi Notary apart from his name and this poem.

Jer.SJ MS N. 36, 18th c., pp. 1r-1118v – Similar to the MS 44 this MS also contains a relatively short version of the commentary.

Jer.SJ MS N. 140, 1811, pp. 1a-1168b – The commentary is on pp. 1r-1125r. The rest of the MS contains lists of the commentary as well as a copy of the one-line commentary on Sirach.

Jer.SJ MS N. 65, (Not dated), pp. 1r-1422v – This copy of the Commentary is not dated, however it is thought that the MS was written by Yakob Nalean himself.[346] This hypothesis is impossible to prove as there are no any attributions to Nalean in the colophon of the MS.

ViM MS N. 628, 1821, pp. 2r-46v – This MS contains only the commentary on chapter 13. The scribe, who gives his name as Yakob, explains in the introduction that the exhortative nature of this chapter was the reason he chose to copy it.

ViM MS N. 1052, 1823, pp. 4r-895r – Contains commentary on chapters 15 – 32.

3.5 Nalean's Theological Views and Hermeneutical Methods

Nalean can truly be named the greatest thinker of his time among Armenians. The principal method of Nalean's interpretation is homiletic or kerygmatic. For him it is important that the truths expressed in his works penetrate into the readers' hearts and change their insight '...ի խաւարէ ի լոյս, յանգիտութենէ ի ճշմարիտ գիտութիւն' [...i xawarê i loys, yangitowtenê i čšmarit gitowtiwn] (from darkness to light, from ignorance to true knowledge). His primary aim is to combine Christian spiritual teachings with philosophy and more scientific explanations of life. In many cases he refers to the prophets (e. g. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Amos), the apostles (e. g. Peter, Paul, James etc.) as well as the holy fathers of the Church (e. g. Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Alexander of Alexandria, Augustine, etc.) incorporating along with them references from the most famous Greco-Roman thinkers, e. g. Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Homer, Sophocles, Porphyrios, Seneca etc. Nalean also makes significant use of the works of the most renowned Armenian philosophers, historians and poets: Movsês Xorenac'i, Ełišê, Davit' Anhałt', Grigor Narekac'i, Grigor Magistros, Nersês Šnorhali, Nersês Lambronac'i, Xač'atur Kеč'arec'i etc. Throughout his commentary on Sirach, Nalean implicitly shows his concern about the religious decline and social injustice that the Armenian community in Constantinople was facing. One can see that the main reason for writing this commentary is not

346 Գ. Բամբուկչեան, Յակոբ Պատրիարք Նալեան [G. Bambowkč'ean, '*Yakob Patriarch Nalean*', p. 43].

an abstract scholarly desire to explain the book itself, but first and foremost to use Sirach as a source for exhortation and teaching. Nalean regards Sirach as 'Մատեան քրիստոնէական գրեալ յառաջ քրիստոնէութեան' [Matean ǩristonêakan greal yaŕaǰ ǩristonêowtean] (A Christian book written before Christianity).

The same social and religious themes are dominant in almost all his other works as well. For instance, in just a few lines of a poem preserved in an unpublished MSS, he describes the situation in the Armenian communities in Constantinople and elsewhere as follows:

Մեծացի՛ր անձն իմ խղճալի,
Ի բարութեանց լեալ ի բաց,
Յումմէ՞ յուսաս գրութիւն՝
Բարեպաշտօն չի մնաց...

Իսպառ բարձեալ են իրաւունք,
Ընդ նոցին սուտ տարածեալք,
Առ մեծամեծս և առ ստրուկս՝
Ճշմարտութիւն չի մնաց...

Եղբայր-եղբօր դժկամակի,
Իբր ընդ օտարս ունելով,
Ընկերն ընկեր ջանայ զրկել,
Սէր ընկերի չի մնաց...[347]

[Mecaċi՛r anjn im xłčali,
I barowtеanċ leal i baċ,
Yowmmê՞ yowsas growtiwn՝
Barepaštôn č'i mnaċ...
Ispaŕ barjeal en irawownǩ,
Ənd noċin sowt taracealǩ,
Aŕ mecamecs ew aŕ strowks՝
Čšmartowtiwn č'i mnaċ...
Ełbayr-ełbôr džkamaki,
Ibr ənd ôtars ownelov,
Ənkern ənker ǰanay zrkel,
Sêr ənkeri č'i mnaċ...]

Grow up, my miserable soul!
Being far from kindness,
From whom are you hoping
to get a letter?
There is no a righteous man left.

347 MM. MS N. 2696, pp. 72v-73r.

Rights are entirely taken away
Whilst the lie is spread instead,
Both among the rich and among the slaves,
There is no truth left.

Brother complains against his brother,
As if he does so against a stranger.
Friend tries to deprive his friend,
There is no love left for a friend.

The theological and moral motive of Nalean's commentary is that everyone must be grateful for everything he is given in this world. If a person accepts everything as a gift from God, then like Job he will thankfully glorify the Lord and will humbly bear all the misfortunes of his life. Nalean bases his theology of the correct attitude to human life on the famous phrase of Seneca 'Շնորհակալ եմ զտկարութեան մարմնոյս, որ ստիպէ զիս ոչ կարել զոր ոչ պարտիմ կամել' [Šnorhakal em ztkarowtean marmnoys, or stipê zis oč' karel zor oč' partim kamel] (I am thankful for the inability of my body, which makes me unable to do what I am not supposed to wish).

In the second volume of the MS 106 of Jerusalem depository there is an unpublished and unique poem dedicated to Nalean's commentary on Sirach written by not a very well known Esayi Konstandnowpolsec'i, which can easily be regarded as a characteristic of Nalean's work and the methods applied in his commentary.

Ոտանաւոր սակս Մեկնութեան բարոյական փիլիսոփայութեան մեծի իմաստնոյն Սիրաքայ, շարահիւսեալ յումեմնէ յետնեալ բանասիրէ Եսայեայ նօտարէ Կոստանդնուպօլսեցւոյ[348]

Otanawor saks Meknowtean baroyakan p̣ilisop̣ayowtean meci imastnoyn Sirak̆ay, šarahiwseal yowmemnê yetneal banasirê Esayeay nôtarê Kostandnowpôlsec̣woy

A poem dedicated to the Commentary on the ethical philosophy of great wise man Sirach written by a later philologist Esayi Nôtarê Konstandnowpolsec'i

Մատեան տենչալի՛ առըն ըղձական,
Մեծին Սիրաքայ՛ տիպ Սօղոմոնեան,
Մեկնաբանելով՛ վեհըն պատուական,
Յակօբ Պատրիարք՛ գերըզգօնական:

Տաղըս յօրիեաց՛ տողիւ կըշռական,
Յամէն համարի՛ վերջըն աւարտման,

348 Jer. SJ MS N. 65, (Not dated), p. 1907v.

Խորին իմացմամբ՝ նիւթով պարզական,
Յակոբ Պատրիարք՝ ներհուն չափաբան:

Արծիւ սրբատես՝ անթարթ նըկատման,
Բանին Միածնի՝ գետ Արեգական,
Ճառեան ըզնմանէ՝ անըսկզբնական,
Յակօբ Պատրիարք՝ խոր Աստուածաբան:

Յարմար պատմութեամբ՝ ներ վայելչական,
Յարացոյց բերեալ՝ ապացուցական,
Ըստ տրամաբանից՝ որ կանոնական,
Յակօբ Պատրիարք՝ նո՛ւրբ իմաստաբան:

Անքուն աշխատմամբ՝ ներ գիշերական,
Ըզբազում գըրեանս որ շարադրական,
Թողեալ յիշատակ՝ ազգիս Հայկական,
Յակոբ Պատրիարք՝ գագաթ Պետական:

Սակաւ ներբողեան՝ որ դըրւատական,
Յիմոյս պիտակէ՝ Քարտուղարական,
Եսայի կոչմամբ՝ ներ Ֆիւզանդական,
Խընդրեմ ոչ եղծեալ՝ մինչեւ յաւիտեան:

[Matean tenč'ali՝ aṙən əɫjakan,
Mecin Siraƙay՝ tip Sôɫomonean,
Meknabanelov՝ vehən patowakan,
Yakôb Patriarƙ՝ gerəzgônakan:
Taɫəs yôrieaċ՝ toɫiw kəšṙakan,
Yamên hamari՝ verǰən awartman,
Xorin imaċmamb՝ niwṫov parzakan,
Yakob Patriarƙ՝ nerhown č'aṗaban:
Arciw sərates՝ anṫarṫ nəkatman,
Banin Miacni՝ get Aregakan,
Čaṙean əznmanê՝ aṇəskzbnakan,
Yakôb Patriarƙ՝ xo՛r Astowacaban:
Yarmar patmowṫeamb՝ ner vayelč'akan,
Yaraċoyċ bereal՝ apaċowċakan,
Əst tramabaniċ՝ or kanonakan,
Yakôb Patriarƙ՝ no՛wrb imastaban:
Anƙown ašxatmamb՝ ner gišerakan,
Əzbazowm gəreans or šaradrakan,
Ṫoɫeal yišatak՝ azgis Haykakan,
Yakob Patriarƙ՝ gagaṫ Petakan:
Sakaw nerboɫean՝ or dərwatakan,
Yimoys pitakê՝ Ƙartowɫarakan,
Esayi koč'mamb՝ ner Fiwzandakan,
Xəndrem oč՝ eɫceal՝ minč'ew yawitean]

A desirable book of a longing man,
Great Sirach of Solomonian kind,

Commented by the honourable nobleman,
Patriarch Yakob of a great mind.

He composed poems with well-aimed lines,
Following the termination of each verse,
With his deep knowledge and in simple ways,
Patriarch Yakob, astute rhymester.

An Eagle clear-sighted of unblinking observation,
Of the Word of the Only-Begotten, the river of the Sun,
Radiated from Him, the One without beginning,
Patriach Yakob, profound Theologian.

With an appropriate, matching narrative,
He brought examples able to affirm,
According to the rules of logic,
Patriach Yakob, fine Philosopher.

Through sleepless labour carried in the nights,
Many writings were laid down,
Which were left to the Armenian people,
By Patriach Yakob, pinnacle of the nation.

The insufficiency of this ode of laudation,
Is because I am mere a secretary,
By the name of Yesayi in Byzantium,
My plea is not to refute until eternity.

As said in the poem, each and every verse of Sirach is treated in this commentary as a particle which, when combined with other 'particles', form *the wise and happy person* described by Ben Sira himself. This makes clear that Nalean was led to compose a commentary on this particular book of the Bible and not another because of his desire to see the truths expressed in Sirach crystalised in his own people.

There is no introduction to the commentary but only a few lines stating that each chapter of his commentary can be summarized in one line. As we know, both the Zôhrapean and Bagratowni versions of Sirach finish at chs. 42/43 followed by an appendix called "Բանք Սիրաքայ", [Banǩ Siraǩay] (The Words of Sirach). However, Nalean's commentary goes beyond these chapters as the base text used by Nalean was in his days the only published version of Oskan Erewanc'i (1666).

Nalean follows the standard style of exegesis: verses from the Bible are presented first in a distinctive style and colour (red), then the commentary is presented in the same calligraphic style but in different colour (black). Apart from this standard form of exegesis, Nalean thematically divided every chapter of his work into separate sections, highlighting their global and mystical mean-

ing and then separately commenting on the lines. Another peculiarity of this commentary is the way in which it presents a quick introductory summary of the meaning of each line before giving a detailed explanation of it. The possible reason for explaining every line in one sentence first and then passing on to a deeper explanation could be the difficulty of memorizing long passages. Thus, in order to make it easier for his readers to understand the precise meaning of the biblical text he presented his commentary in one sentence first.

3.6 One-Line Commentary by Nalean

Nalean's unique approach to this book of Ben-Sira can be summed up in the following lines:[349]

– 4r–950v ("Էկլեսիաստիկոս, Մեկնութիւն բարոյական փիլիսոփայութեան Յեսուայ Որդւոյ Սիրաքայ արարեալ Տեառն Յակոբայ պատրիարգին մեծին Պօլսոյ", [Êklesiastikos, Meknowtiwn baroyakan p̣ilisop̣ayowtean Yesoway Ordwoy Sirak̆ay arareal Tearn̆ Yakobay patriargin mecin Pôlsoy] (Ecclesiasticus, Commentary on the Ethical Philosophy of Jesus Son of Sirach by the Patriarch Yakob of Great Constantinople). As can be seen, Nalean combines the Latin and the Greek versions of the name of the book under one title. On the one hand he calls it Ecclesiasticus, by which it is known in Latin, and on the other hand he adds to this name the Greek 'Σοφια του Ιεσου υιου του Σιραχ'. Of course the Hebrew text is not used by Nalean because it was not discovered until the late 19th century.

– 4r–31v Ch.1 – Հասարակօրէն բաժանումն եւ ցուցակ նշանաւոր իրաց գլխոյս: Նախ ի սոյն գլխոջ յառաջնոյ համարէ մինչեւ ի ԺԱ համարն դրուատէ զիմաստութիւն: Դու է՛ւս լցցիս իմաստութեամբ, որ երկիւղ է Տեառն: [Hasarakôren bažanowmn ew ċowċak nšanawor irać glxoys: Nax i soyn glxoǰ yaŕaǰnoy hamarê minč̌'ew i ŽA hamarn drowatê zimastowtiwn: Dow e՛ws lċ̣is imastowteamb, or erkiwł ê Tearn̆] (General overview and list of the important points of the chapter. Firstly, in verses 1–11 of this chapter [Sirach] praises wisdom. You also must be filled with wisdom which is fear of God).

– 31r–44v Ch. 2 – Որդեակ, եթէ մերձենաս ծառայել Աստուծոյ կաց յարդարութեան... Մերձենալն առ Աստուախ լինի նախ հաւատով... [Ordeak, eṫê merjenas caŕayel Astowcoy kać yardarowtean... Merjenaln aŕ Asto-

349 These lines are from the manuscript M. M. Matenadaran, MS N. 1014, 1771, pp. 4a-960b.

wax lini nax hawatov...] Child, if you approach God in order to serve him, remain in righteousness. One approaching God must firstly have faith.

– 44v–63r Ch. 3 – Որդւոյ իմաստնոյ [Այսինքն՝ որդիք իմաստնոց] եկեղեցի արդարոց... [Ordwoy imastnoy [Aysinǩn՝ ordiǩ imastnoċ] ekełeċi ardaroċ...] Wise children are the Church of righteousness.

– 63r–91r Ch. 4 – Որդեակ, յողորմութենէ աղքատին մի՛ զլացիս... [Ordeak, yołormowtenê ałǩatin mi՛ zlasċis...] Child, do not hesitate to help the poor!

– 91v–100r Ch. 5 – Մի՛ ձկտիր առ ստացուածս անիրաւս... [Mi jktir ař staċowacs aniraws...] Do not try to get dishonest wealth.

– 100v–126v Ch. 6 – Մի՛ լինիր վասն բարեկամին թշնամի մերձաւորին... [Mi linir vasn barekamin tšnami merjaworin...] Do not be an enemy to your relatives.

– 126v–166v Ch. 7 – Մի՛ գործեր զչար եւ զքեզ մի ըմբռնեսցեն... [Mi gorcer zč՛ar ew zǩez mi əmbřnesċen...] Do not do evil and you will not be caught.

– 166v–181v Ch. 8 – Մի՛ կացեր ընդ առն հզորի... [Mi kaċer ənd ařn hzori...] Do not stand against a person who is more powerful than you.

– 81v–200r Ch. 9 – Մի՛ մախասցիս ընդ կնոջ գրկի քո... [Mi maxasċis ənd knoǰ grki ǩo...] Do not surrender to a woman.

– 200r–234r Ch. 10 – Դատաւոր իմաստուն դատեսցէ՛ զժողովուրդ իւր... [Datawor imastown datesċê zžołovowrd iwr...] The wise judge will judge his people.

Here the exhortative lines move on to statements on the subject of character: rightiousness, wisdom, fear of the Lord, etc.

– 234r–259r Ch. 11 – Իմաստութիւն խոնարհի բարձրացուցանէ զգլուխ նորին... [Imastowtiwn xonarhi barjraċowċanê zglowx norin...] The wisdom of a modest person raises his head.

– 259r–268v Ch. 12 – Եթէ բարերարեսցես, գիտեա որոյ արասցես, այսինքն՝ եթէ ումէք բարի առնիցես, այնպէս ընտրողաբար արա... [Eťê barerareśċes, gitea oroy arasċes, aysinǩn՝ eťê owmêǩ bari ařniċes, aynpês əntrołabar ara...] If you want to help someone, know whom you help.

– 268v–283v Ch. 13 – Որ շոշափէ զձիւթ, պղծեսցէ ի նմանէ... [Or šošaṗê zjiwť, płcesċê i nmanê...] Whoever touches pitch, he will get dirty from it.

– 283v–300r Ch. 14 Երանեալ է, որ ոչ է գայթակղեալ բանիւ բերանոյ իւրոյ... ըստ Դավթի փիլիսոփայի հանճարեղ վարդապետի է... [Eraneal ê, or oč՛ ê gayťakłeal baniw beranoy iwroy... əst Davťi ṗilisoṗayi hančareł vardapeti ê...] Blessed is [he] who is not tempted by the word of his mouth, as it is said by the genius philosopher Dawit՛ Vardapet.

– 300r–314r Ch. 15 – Որ երկնչի յԱստուծոյ արասցէ զբարի, այսինքն՝ երկիւղածն Աստուծոյ խորշելով ի չարէ մեղաց... [Or erknč՛i yAstow-

coy arasċê zbari, aysinkʻ erkiwłacn Astowcoy xoršelov i čʻarê mełaċ...] Whoever fears God, he will do good things: fearing God he will withhold sinful deeds.

– 314r–128r Ch. 16 – Մի բերկրեսցիս ընդ որդիս ամբարիշտս... Մինչ կրես ի հոգիդ զպատկերն Աստուծոյ... [Mi berkresċis ənd ordis ambarišts... Minčʻ kres i hogid zpatkern Astowcoy...] Do not rejoice with unrighteous children as you have the likeness of God.

– 328r–345v Ch. 17 – Աստուած ստեղծ յերկրէ զմարդն... Առնել ասի իր ինչ յորժամ կազմի... [Astowac stełc yerkrê zmardn... Aṙnel asi ir inčʻ yoržam kazmi...] God created man on the Earth and He will do everything in its time.

– 345v–364v Ch. 18 – Որ կեայ յաւիտեան, ստեղծ զամենեսեան ի միասին... Այսու կործանի աղանդն մինիքեցւոց... [Or keay yawitean, stełc zamenesean i miasin... Aysow korcani ałandn miniǩeċwoċ...] He who exists forever himself created everything at the same time: with this [Sirach] refutes the Manichean heresy.

– 364v–384r Ch. 19 – Գործունեայ արբշիռ ոչ հասցի ի մեծութիւն... Այսինքն՝ գործոյ տէր է, կամ մշակ, կամ արուեստաւոր եւ հետեւի արբեցութեան... [Gorcowneay arbšiṙ oč hasċi i mecowťiwn... Aysinkʻ gorcoy têr ê, kam mšak, kam arowestawor ew hetewi arbeċowťean...] A person who works hard and drinks a lot at the same time will not be able to reach greatness.

– 384r–399v Ch. 20 – Զիա՞րդ, կարի լաւ է յանդիմանել... Ըստ կարգի եւ բանաւոր յանդիմանութիւն գոլով շահաւոր յանդիմանողին... [Zia՞rd, kari law ê yandimanel... Əst kargi ew banawor yandimanowťiwn golov šahawor yandimanołin...] Why is it good to be disciplined? Because the discipline of a worthy person can be very beneficial.

– 399v–415v Ch. 21 – Որդեակ, մեղար, մի եւս յաւելցիս վերստին... [Ordeak, mełar, mi ews yawelċis verstin...] Child, if you have sinned, do not repeat it any more.

– 415v–431r Ch. 22 – Քարիւ կաւեղինաւ քարկոծի ծոյլն... [Ǩariw kawełinaw ǩarkoci coyln...] A lazy person will be stoned with clay stones.

– 431v–448r Ch. 23 – Տէր, հայր եւ իշխան կենաց իմոց, մի թողցես զիս... [Têr, hayr ew išxan kenaċ imoċ, mi ťołċes zis...] Lord, father and master of my life, do not leave me...[350]

– 448r–491r Ch. 24 – Զգօնութիւն գովեսցէ զանձն իւր... [Zgônowťiwn govesċê zanjn iwr...] Your soul will benefit from your watchfulness.

350 Here the description of the chapter is presented in the form of a prayer. In this chapter, Sirach gives an account of many human sins and here finds it important to call upon the Almighty Master asking for help.

– 491r–518r Ch. 25 – Երեք բարեհաճոյացան հոգւոյ իմոյ... [Ereǩ barehačoyaċan hogwoy imoy...] Do the three delighful things...

– 518r–533r Ch. 26 – Չար մարդոյ չար կին առդիպի ի վարձ մեղաց... [Č'ar mardoy č'ar kin arďipi i varj mełaċ...] A bad wife is a yoke to a bad man for his sins.

- 533r–554r Ch. 27 – Վասն կարօտութեան բազումք լքան... [Vasn karôtowťean bazowmǩ lǩan...] Because of poverty many have left.

– 554r–573r Ch. 28 – Որ վրէժ խնդրել կամի ի Տեառնէ գտցէ զվրեժխնդրութիւն... [Or vrêž xndrel kami i Teaŕnê gtċê zvrežxndrowťiwn...] The vengeful one will suffer the Lord's vengeance.[351]

– 573r–587r Ch. 29 – Որ առնէ զողորմութիւն' փոխ տայ մերձաւորի իւրոյ... [Or aŕnê zołormowťiwn' ṗox tay merjawori iwroy...] Those who are merciful, lend money to their neighbours. Cornelios A'Lapida says that the Jews misunderstood this verse as justifying usury among them.

– 587r–604r Ch. 30 – Որ սիրէ զորդի իւր յաճախէ ի վերայ նորա զգան... [Or sirê zordi iwr yačaxê i veray nora zgan...] One that loves his son will continuously scourge him.

– 604r–624v Ch. 31 – Տքնութիւն համեստութեան[352] ծաղէ զմարմինս... [Tǩnowťiwn hamestowťean całê zmarmins...] Wakefulness over wealth wastes away one's flesh.

– 624v–641r Ch. 32 – Կառաւար զքեզ կացուցին, մի բարձրամտիր... [Kaŕawar zǩez kaċowċin, mi barjramtir...] Do not become conceited if you are appointed as a table server.

– 641r–660v Ch. 33 – Երկիւղածի Տեառն ոչ պատահեսցին չարիք... [Erkiwłaci Teaŕn oč' patahesċin č'ariǩ...] Evil will never approach the one fearing the Lord.

– 660v–674r Ch. 34 – Ընդունայն յոյս եւ ստութիւն առն անմըտի... [Əndownayn yoys ew stowťiwn aŕn anməti...] False and pointless is the hope of a foolish man.

– 674r–693v Ch. 35 – Որ պահէ զօրենս բազմապատկէ զզոհս... [Or pahê zôrens bazmapatkê zzohs...] Whoever obeys the Law multiplies his sacrifice.

– 693v–707v Ch. 36 – Ողորմեայ մեզ Աստուած ամենեցուն եւ հայեաց ի մեզ... [Ołormeay mez Astowac amenecown ew hayeaċ i mez...] Look at us, O God of all, and have mercy on us.

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351 This sentence actually belongs to the previous chapter 27, but in the oldest Armenian translations it has become a part of the 28th.

352 This is a wrong rendering of the word 'հարստութիւն' [harstowťiwn] (wealth).

– 707v–725v Ch. 37 – Զգօն լիջիր ընդ ամենայն բարեկամս... [Zgôn liǰir ənd amenayn barekams...] Be vigilant with all friends.

– 725v–748v Ch. 38 – Պատուեաւ մարդն վասն հարկաւորութեան նորին... [Patoweaw mardn vasn harkaworowt̓ean norin...] A man is valued according to his importance.

– 748v–773v Ch 39 – Զիմաստութիւն ամենեցուն նախնեաց խուզեսցէ իմաստունն... [Zimastowt̓iwn amenec̓own naxneac̓ xowzesc̓ê imastownn...] The wisest one learns the wisdom of the ancestors.

– 773v–792v Ch. 40 – Զբազումն մեծ ստեղծաւ ամենեցուն մարդոց եւ լուծ ծանր ի վերայ որդւոց Ադամայ... [Zbazowmn mec stełcaw amenec̓own mardoc̓ ew lowc canr i veray ordwoc̓ Adamay...] [God] created human beings greater than all other [creatures] and put greater burden on the children of Adam.

– 792v–806r Ch. 41 – Ով մահ, որպէս դառն է յիշատակ քո... [Ov mah, orpês dar̄n ê yišatak ḱo...] O death, how bitter it is to remember you.

– 806r–822r Ch. 42 – Մի կրկնեսցես զզրոյց լուեալ սակս յայտնութեան... [Mi krknesc̓es zzroyc̓ loweal saks yaytnowt̓ean...] Do not repeat whatever you hear in order to inform others.

– 822r–851r Ch. 43 – Բարձրութեան հաստատութիւն գեղեցկութիւն է նորա... [Barjrowt̓ean hastatowt̓iwn gełec̓kowt̓iwn ê nora...] The heights of heaven is His beauty.[353]

– 851r – Here is a short poem on this page by Nalean which praises the Lord.

Կարօղ սեղանի քեզ Արարչիդ փառք պատիւ,
Զանհուն կարես ազնիա առնել սոսկ բանիւ...
Ի քոյդ էից փոխ ընկալաք զայս գովեստ,
Քոյդ անմոռաց ի գանձ իմաստից տամք պահեստ:

Karôł sełani ḱez Ararč̓id ṗar̄ḱ patiw,
Zanhown kares aznia ar̄nel sosk baniw...
I ḱoyd êic̓ ṗox ənkalaḱ zays govest,
Ḱoyd anmor̄ac̓ i ganj imastic̓ tamḱ pahest

To you, O Creator be glory and honour,
With a single word you can create nations,
From your being we accepted this praise,
And we give this to keep as a treasure of your unforgettable wisdom.

Short poems like this can be found in almost all the chapters of this commentary.

353 This comment resembles psalm 19:1, (The heavens declare the glory of God).

As noted, the oldest texts of the Armenian translations of Ben-Sira end at this chapter. However, Nalean carries on translating other chapters from the Latin text and commenting on them. After finishing the 43rd chapter, Nalean says, 'It is possible to divide the whole book of Sirach into three parts: Part 1 (Ch. 1) Praise of wisdom, part 2 (Chts. 2–43) Canons of wisdom, part 3 (Chts. 44 to the end) Praise of the ancestors who were blessed through experiencing wisdom'.[354]

– 870r–888r Ch. 45 – Օրինակ օրհաց ըղձալի Աստուծոյ եւ մարդկան Մովսէս, որոյ յիշատակն օրհնութեամբ եղիցի: [Ôrinak ôriaċ əẖjali Astowcoy ew mardkan Môsês, oroy yišatakn ôrhnowťeamb eẖiċi] Moses, loved by God and people, is an example of obeying the Law: blessed be his memory.

– 888r–901r Ch. 46 – Հզոր ի պատերազմի Յեսու՝ որդի Նաւեայ, օրինակ անյաղթելի մարտիկի: [Hzor i paterazmi Yesow' ordi Naweay, ôrinak anyaẖteli martiki] Powerful in war [was] Joshua son of Nun, example of an undefeated soldier.

– 901r–918v Ch. 47 – Զկնի սոցա յարեաւ Նաթան, կրթիչ եւ օրինակ յարուեստի: [Zkni soċa yareaw Naťan, krťič' ew ôrinak yarowesti] After them came Nathan [who was] an educator and an example in culture.

– 918r–934v Ch. 48 – Եւ յարեաւ Եղիաս մարգարէ իբրեւ զհուր, որդեակ եւ դու խոսիր իբրն զհուր... [Ew yareaw Eẖias margarê ibrew zhowr, ordeak ew dow xosir ibrew zhowr...] And then arose Elijah like a fire: child, and you too, speak like fire!

– 934r–944r Ch. 49 – Յիշատակ Յօսիայ, որ փոխեաց զԻսրաէլ պահելով զաւանդս: [Yišatak Yôsiay, or ṗoxeaċ zIsraêl pahelov zawands] Memory of Josiah who changed Israel preserving its legacy.

– 944r–950r Ch. 50 – Եւ Սիմէօն, օրդի Օնեսայ, որ ի կեանս իւրում բարձրացոյց զտուն Իսրաէլի... [Ew Simêôn, ôrdi Ôneuay, or i keans iwrowm barjraċoyċ ztown Israêli...] And Simon, son of Onias who during his life raised the house of Israel....

Similar to some other Armenian commentaries on the OT, Nalean's commentary on Sirach has a Christian character. Instead of taking a merely academic approach to the task of interpretation, Nalean applies a fusion of academic and spiritual methods of exegesis. At the same time Nalean makes sure that his commentary does not become a guide of earthly behaviour[355] but rather a source

354 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 305v.

355 A similar approach is found in the commentary of Hamam on Proverbs. Cf. Hamam, *Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (Ed. R. T. Thomson, Leuven: Peeters, 2005), p. 19.

of inspiration to create the Heavenly Kingdom on earth and to become a dweller of that Kingdom.

It is known that the Hebrew text of Sirach did not contain explicit allusions to the existence of an afterlife. The understating of life hereafter came into existence between the time when Sirach was written and its translation by the grandson of Ben Sira. However, the Greek translation and its daughter texts (including Armenian) have the word 'fire' in Sir. 7:17 which refers to eternity. Nalean allocates almost 15 pages just to the interpretation of this single verse. Applying both the allegorical approach of the Alexandrian school of interpretation and the literal method of the Antiochian school, Nalean exhibits his broad knowledge of these traditions and uses his own homiletic style of exegesis, which is heavily influenced by Origen.

The *decay and worms* gave no hope for eternity, even in a negative context, and thus the Greek text added 'fire' which would also infer the existence of a better life if the law was kept. '...For the punishment of the ungodly is *fire and worms*',[356] the literal interpretation of being eaten by worms implied that the end of a man came once he died and became food for worms. However, Nalean uses allegory here as well. He brings the postmortem consumption by worms into earthly life and says, 'բարկութիւն ...առաւել քան այլոց, ինքեան բարկացողին վնասէ, զի է որդն ծնեալ ի բնութենէ բարկացողին...' (anger harms the one who gets angry more than anyone else, for it [anger] is a worm born of the nature of the angry person). For the 'fire' he gives two interpretations, one allegorical and one literal. Referring to a treatise of St. John Chrysostom[357] Nalean explains the cleansing and purifying nature of fire. 'Զհուրն բաժանէ զհամասեռսն և զանհամասեռսն: Զհամասեռսն որպէս պղինձ յոսկւոյ և զանհամասեռսն որպէս ժանկ ի յարծաթոյ' [Zhowrn bažanê zhamaseṙsn ew zanhamaseṙsn: Zhamaseṙsn orpês płinj yoskwoy ew zanhamaseṙsn orpês žank i yarcaťoy] (Fire separates homogeneous and non homogeneous substances: homogeneous as gold and copper and non homogeneous as rust and silver). Then Nalean elaborates on the idea of an adulterer who like fire penetrates into a family and becomes a stumbling block thus separating two loving people who had become one through holy matrimony. The next version of the interpretation on the damaging quality of fire is expressed in a literal way, as an unceasing fire which will burn the sinner in the everlasting life.

356 Sir. 7:17b.

357 Cf. Ph. Schaff, *St. John Chrysostom: On the Priesthood; Ascetic Treatises; Select Homilies and Letters; Homilies on the Statutes* (New York, Christian Literature Publishing & Co., 18886), p. 292. [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf109.html], Revised 2. 10. 2013.

As has been said, the Christianized metaphorical explanations found in Nalean's commentary are greatly influenced by Origen. They are based on Origen's familiarity with the NT and his christological and ecclesiological allegorism.[358] Like Origen, Nalean applies the biblical texts to the everyday faith experience of Christians. 'The dialectic nature of the links between both Testaments called for a "spiritual" interpretation, namely for a Christ-centered reading of all biblical texts'.[359]

More about theological and exegetical approaches of Nalean is presented in my section on the theology of Sirach (3.5). Both theological and secular works of Nalean must be taken into consideration when examining their social, ideological and spiritual themes. His poems are of especially great value as they represent the overall picture of the situation in Constantinople where Nalean lived, in Jerusalem which he visited many times, and in many Armenian communities, both in Armenia and abroad.

358 Cf. Ch. Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden, Brill, 2006), p. 207.

359 Kannengiesser, '*Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*', p. 207.

4 The Main themes of Sirach discussed by Yacob Nalean

4.1 Wisdom, Fear of God, the Law and Happiness

In this chapter I discuss the main subjects examined by the Book of Sirach. The scope of the book is very broad, covering a large variety of topics, including exhortations on prudence and self discipline (chs. 18–23), praise of wisdom (ch. 24), biographical narratives about the ancestors of Israel (chs. 44–50), etc. For the examination of these important passages of Sirach, I use some of the themes presented by Alexander Di Lella in the tenth chapter of his commentary.[360] Nalean's commentary, in particular the chapters which discuss the above mentioned issues, will be my main reference.

Despite being the first (and so far the only) commentary in Armenian on the book of Sirach, Nalean's work gives a very profound and in-depth examination of this book. Each verse of Sirach is treated from a variety of standpoints. For example, speaking about wisdom and her source, Nalean first gives an explanation from the point of view of ancient Greek philosophy which is then compared with the Christian understanding of wisdom as 'σοφία-λόγος' (իմաստաբանութիւն) [imastabanowtiwn]. Nalean asserts that Ben Sira's wisdom can be obtained only when a person is fully at peace with God 'գիտելի է, զի գիտութիւն ըստ ճշմարտութեան եւ իսկականի ճանաչման է Աստուծոյ եւ խաղաղութեան ընդ նմա'[361][giteli ê, zi gitowtiwn əst čšmartowtean ew iskakani čanačʻman ê Astowcoy ew xałałowtean ənd nma] (it is known that the true knowledge [wisdom] comes through knowing God and being at peace with him). This approach has its roots in the traditions of the OT as well as in Platonic philosophy. For Plato being at peace with God was the condition for receiving a reward from God: 'So, we shall be at peace with God and with ourselves, like the victors in the games collecting their prizes, we receive our reward, and both in this life and in the thousand-year journey'.[362] Nalean compares personified wisdom in ch. 24 of Sirach to a Վարդապետ (Archmandrite/teacher). He probably means here Jesus but does not explicitly say who is sitting on his throne and inviting people to the feast.[363] There is a contradictory verse though in Sirach which says the opposite of what Jesus says in

360 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', pp. 75–92.
361 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 5v.
362 Plato, *The Republic* (transl. with an introduction by H.D.P. Lee Middlesex, 1955), p. 401.
363 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 448r.

the New Testament. Sir. 24:21 says, 'Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more'.[364] In John 4:14 Jesus says: '...but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty'. The wisdom that Ben Sira offers to drink is not able to satisfy one's thirst forever and for that reason whoever drinks from it 'will thirst for more', but the water of Christ is everlastingly satisfying so there will be no need to look for more of it. However, if we look at these two verses from a different point of view we can say that the water which gives wisdom in Sirach is the same water given by Jesus but just in different times and realities. That is, during their earthly lives human beings need a supply of water, but the evil and foolish world can sometimes lead astray those who have drunk of that water.[365] Consequently they have to have a new supply of water [wisdom] and be glued together like potsherds[366] in order not to return to their previous state of 'անզգամութիւն' as Bagratowni translates 'ἄφρων'. In the everlasting life Jesus once and for all will give the same water to those who have followed his way in their lives, constantly receiving the water of wisdom.

A similar comparison of wisdom with a rich woman is given in Prov. 9:1–5,

> Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table. She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls from the highest places in the town, "You that are simple, turn in here!" To those without sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed."

Both of the characters described in Sirach and Proverbs invite others to join them in their feast: 'Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits'.[367] 'You that are simple, turn in here... Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed'.[368] The only difference between the two hosts is that the one in Ben Sira invites everyone, whereas the other host in Proverbs just those 'որ ոք իցէ անզգամ' who are foolish in order to be filled with the fruits of wisdom herself. Nalean presents this passage of Sir. 24 as an invitation which will enable people 'երկրակոխաց' [erkrakoxaċ] to acquaint themselves with knowledge about

364 Sir. 24:21.

365 J. Gill, *An exposition of the New Testament, in three volumes: in which The Sense of the Sacred Text is given; Doctrinal and Practical Truths are set in a plain and easy Light, Difficult Places Explained, Seeming Contradictions Reconciled; Whatever is Material in the Various Readings, and the several Oriental Versions, is observed. The Whole illustrated with Notes taken from the most ancient Jewish Writings, Vol. 1* (London, 1746–8), p. 711.

366 Sir. 22:9.

367 Sir. 24:19.

368 Prov. 9:4–5.

wisdom, and consequently with wisdom. 'Քանզի իմաստութիւն թէպետ ըստ ինքեան պայծառ է եւ ընդ արեգական համեմատել առաւել գտանի իմաստութիւն, սակայն յերկրակոխաց ոչ ճանաչի գեղեցկութիւն նորա' [Ǩanzi imastowtiwn têpet əst inǩean paycaṙ ê ew ənd aregakan hamematel aṙawel gtani imastowtiwn, sakayn yerkrakoxaċ oč' čanač'i geɫeċkowtiwn nora] (For even though wisdom herself is bright and greater in comparison than the Sun, her beauty is not known by human beings [lit. those who step on earth]).

Defending the greatness of wisdom, Nalean argues against Epicureanism and its teaching of happiness which is through pleasure only. For Epicureans, happiness was the most important state for a person. Epicurean happiness was based merely on feelings and a sense of freedom, happiness is derived from pleasure.[369] Throughout his commentary, Nalean mentions many times that obtaining wisdom is not easy and those who try to seek it without making any effort will finish their deceitful journey still having an empty mind and soul. In this regard, Yakob Nalean also disagrees with the teaching of the Stoics and says that it is impossible for our life to be controlled by fate, for the Most High is in control of His creation and everything in this world happens according to the gracious will of the Holy Spirit.[370]

> Արդ, իմաստութիւն լայնապէս առաւել. նախ, նշանակէ զանհուն իմաստութիւն Աստուծոյ, որով Աստուած զարարածս ստեղծ. զի Աստուած իմաստութեամբ հիմունս էարկ երկրի: Զի՞նչ մեծագոյն քան զիմաստութիւն, որ զամենայն ինչ առնէ իմաստութեամբ,[371]
>
> Ard, imastowtiwn laynapês aṙawel. nax, nšanakê zanhown imastowtiwn Astowcoy, orov Astowac zararacs steɫc. zi Astowac imastowteamb himowns êark erkri: Zi՞nč' mecagoyn ǩan zimastowtiwn, or zamenayn inč' aṙnê imastowteamb
>
> Now, wisdom is much greater [than pleasure or fate], first of all it means the infinite wisdom of God, for God set the foundations of the earth with wisdom. Can anyone find anything greater than wisdom?).

Jack Sanders discusses the possible Stoic influence on Sirach. Examining in particular an assertion by Eduard Norden[372] that Sir. 43:27 'He is all' or 'He is the all' could possibly show Stoic influence, he maintains 'it is equally possible that such statements may simply have been current and widespread in Ben Sira's

369 J. Warren, *The Cambridge Companion of Epicureanism* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 1 – 2.
370 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 448v. Cf. T. Brennan, *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 236 – 37.
371 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 448v.
372 Norden viewed Sir. 43:27 'He is all' as a stoic pantheistic statement by Ben Sira.

day, the result of growing philosophical monotheism'.[373] In Nalean's commentary this verse is under 43:29. He uses the phrase 'ներ ամէնեցուն' (in all) in which 'ամէնեցուն' (gen. pl. of pronoun 'all') is referred to people only and not to the entire creation of God. The only possible reason for this translation is Nalean's use of Oskan's text, which translates the Latin 'in omnibus' as 'ներ ամէնեցուն' instead of translating it 'ներ ամենայնի' (in all) including the whole creation rather than just human beings. This is why Nalean's commentary on this verse lacks any exegetical approach to this phrase as a possible pantheistic (Stoic) approach. Instead, a major emphasis is put on it as a representation of God's everlasting presence in the lives of his creatures [people] and especially in the lives of the prophets and the wise,

> Քանզի եթէ Դաւիթ քան զՍիրաք վճիտ եւ պարզագոյն մարգարէութիւն ունէր, տակաւին անբաւական զանձն իւր համարելով ասէր "սքանչելի եղեւ գիտութիւն քո յինէն, զօրացաւ եւ ոչ հանդարտեմ սմա": Եւ Սողոմօն որ զինչ եւ ծածուկ եւ յայտնի գիտել խոստանայր, տակաւին զգիտութիւն արարածոց ասէր իբրեւ ոսկերք յորովայնի հղւոյ, նոյնպէս ոչ գիտասցես զարարածս Աստուծոյ, զոր ինչ առնիցէ զամենայն: Իսկ կատարած խօսից՝ Ինքն է ներ ամէնեցուն, քանզի պատճառելեաց տարաձայն տեսակքն եւ անթիւ նորին անհատիցն կուտակութիւնք ոչ չափին, եւ ընդ իմամցմամբ եւ զգայութեամբք անկանին, ուրեմն առ այն միակն ամենայն, ի սկիզբն ի վախճանն *ամենեցուն* ի պարունակօղն զամենայն գերբնապէս դառնալի է, եւ առ աղբիւրն լուսոյ դառնալի է.
>
> Ǩanzi eťê Dawiť ǩan zSiraǩ včit ew parzagoyn margarêowťiwn ownêr, takawin anbawakan zanjn iwr hamarelov asêr "sǩanč'eli ełew gitowťiwn ǩo yinên, zôraċaw ew oč' handartem sma": Ew Sołomôn or zinč' ew cacowk ew yaytni gitel xostanayr, takawin zgitowťiwn araracoċ asêr ibrew oskerǩ yorovayni hłwoy, noynpês oč' gitasċes zararacs Astowcoy, zor inč' aŕniċê zamenayn: Isk katarac xôsiċ' Inǩn ê ner amêneċown, ǩanzi patčaŕeleaċ tarajayn tesakǩn ew anťiw norin anhatiċn kowtakowťiwnǩ oč' č'aṗin, ew ənd imamċmamb ew zgayowťeambǩ ankanin, owremn aŕ ayn miakn amenayn, i skizbn i vaxčann ameneċown i parownakôłn zamenayn gerbnapês daŕnali ê, ew aŕ ałbiwrn lowsoy daŕnali ê.
>
> For even though David had purer and more explicit prophecy than Sirach, he, still considering himself not [wise] enough, said 'Your knowledge became more wonderful than mine, it has been strengthened and I cannot attain it'. And Solomon who knew everything known and hidden speaks about the Creation as [imperfectly] as the bones still in a mother's womb.[374] Likewise you will not know about the deeds of God and about the things he will do with everything. And as a conclusion to this verse [it is said] 'Ներ ամէնեցուն', [Ner amêneċown] 'in all' because it is impossible to count the number of all His reasons:

373 J. T. Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom* (California: Scholars Press, 1983), p. 52.

374 Nalean here refers to Wis. 7:2 where Solomon says, 'I also am mortal, like everyone else, descendant of the first-formed child of earth; and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh'.

> in the beginning they [people] feel and learn and in the end of all they all return to the one who contains everything [to one] who is the source of the light.

In the tenth chapter of his commentary Alexander Di Lella argues against J. Haspecker's view that the main subject of Sirach is the Fear of the Lord. Di Lella examines the principal themes of Sirach, and states that the fundamental thesis of the book is the following: 'wisdom, which is identified with the Law, can be achieved by one who fears God and keeps the commandments'.[375] He accepts Rudolf Smend's approach that 'Subjectively, wisdom is fear of God; objectively, it is the law book of Moses'.[376] I agree in part with this approach, but I would suggest that 'իմաստութիւն' [imastowtiwn] *wisdom* is not the ultimate point of Sirach, but rather 'երջանկութիւն' [erǰankowtiwn] *happiness*. At the same time, we must bear in mind that *happiness*, which I propose as the main theme of Sirach, is not the state described by the Epicureans[377] but rather final unity with the Creator. This is well expressed by Thomas Aquinas, who distinguishes 'earthly' happiness from the final happiness which is only possible to have in heaven.[378]

> But in men, according to their present state of life, the final perfection is in respect of an operation whereby man is united to God: but this operation neither can be continual, nor, consequently, is it one only, because operation is multiplied by being discontinued. And for this reason in the present state of life, perfect happiness cannot be attained by man.[379]

Some scholars might argue that Ben Sira did not believe in an afterlife[380] and thus under 'happiness' he could not mean 'final unity with God'. But in verses such as Sir. 46:12 and 49:10, Ben Sira talks about receiving life from the bones of the judges 'from where they lie', which allows us to imply that he had if not a deep then at least a partial understanding of the afterlife. Also, as a bearer of the deuteronomistic theology he was undoubtedly aware of the story of Enoch

375 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 76. Cf. J. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach: Ihre religiöse Struktur und ihre literarische und doktrinäre Bedeutung* (AnBib 30, 1976), pp. 87 – 105.

376 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 75, cf. R. Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, hembräisch und deutsch* (Berlin: Reimer, 1906), p. xxiii.

377 Epicurus in his famous 'Letter to Menoeceus' gives the following definition of happiness 'Pleasure is our first and kindred good. It is the starting point of every choice and of every aversion, and to it we always come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge of every good thing'. Cf. J. Warren, '*The Cambridge Companion of Epicureanism*', p. 187 – 8.

378 T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Ney York: Benziger Bross edn, 1947), pp. 795 – 6.

379 T. Aquinas, '*Summa Theologica*', p. 796.

380 Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', pp. 143 – 4.

who was taken by God[381] to heaven without even having to die. It is also interesting to see Patriarch Nalean's explanation of the word 'երանեալ' (blessed) which he uses in some chapters of his commentary instead of 'երջանկութիւն' (happiness). Nalean says that wisdom comes through blessing the Lord and consequently being blessed by him, and thus the act of blessing and being blessed is itself happiness[382] as it is shown in Sir. 14:20 'Happy is the one who meditates on wisdom'. Indeed, Sir. 1:1 'All wisdom is from the Lord' demonstrates that the only one who possesses entire wisdom is God, and He shares it (that is, bestows possibility to be happy) with those who accomplish His will, which is presented in his Law and is shown through fearing the Lord.

Throughout his book, Ben Sira praises wisdom and even sometimes personifies it: 'I [Wisdom] came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist'.[383] I would argue that wisdom here is not presented as the reason for happiness in itself. It is just the engine or the tool by which happiness can be gained: 'A wise person will have praise heaped upon him, and all who see him will call him happy'.[384] Jack Sanders in a different context says that most students of Ben Sira have noted his [Ben Sira's] interest in success and a happy or fortunate life. Sanders even characterizes this interest of Ben Sira as 'eudemonism'.[385] But Sanders does not go beyond this point to emphasize, what I call, the felixial and not sapiential character of Ben Sira's work. The Book of Proverbs, which was one of the sources for Sirach, gives a very clear idea about happiness and the relationship between wisdom and happiness: 'Happy is the person who meditates on wisdom and reasons intelligently'.[386] No one can have happiness except those who find wisdom. Yet wisdom alone is not enough. It is one of many prerequisites for having the final reward: happiness. 'How great is the one who finds wisdom! But none is superior to the one who fears the Lord'.[387] In this verse, Sirach explains that wisdom and the fear of the Lord are almost on the same level of importance. The fear of the Lord is sometimes identified with wisdom[388] or even put on a slightly higher level of preference. As Coggins suggests, 'It seems better, therefore, to regard any division

381 Gen. 5:24.
382 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 296r.
383 Sir. 24:3.
384 Sir. 37:24.
385 J. T. Sanders, '*Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*', p. 9.
386 Prov. 3:13.
387 Sir. 25:10.
388 Sir. 1:16, 27. Cf. G. Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1972), p 243.

between the fear of the Lord and wisdom an essentially false dichotomy, and to understand the fear of the Lord primarily as the manifestation of wisdom [Sir. 1:14]'.[389] Bearing this in mind, however, I am convinced that the main subject of Sirach is happiness, because neither wisdom nor fear of the Lord, love of the Lord, the Law, are presented anywhere in Sirach as the final goal of a person. A perfect person, i.e. the blessed one, is the person who is *happy* through gaining wisdom, fearing the Lord and obeying the Lord's commandments, the Law. Even the Grandson of Ben Sira who wrote the Prologue to the Book does not single out wisdom as the reason for his grandfather's work. Rather he says that Ben Sira 'was himself also led to write something pertaining to instruction and wisdom, so that by becoming familiar also with his book those who love learning might make even greater progress in living according to the law'. One of the majority of scholars who think that wisdom is the main subject of Sirach is Gerhard von Rad, who in his book on wisdom literature, says: '... it is wisdom, and not, for example, the fear of God, that is the fundamental theme of his book as stated by Sirach once again in the epilogue (50:27–29)'.[390] Let us examine the epilogue in order to determine its core meaning. To close the main part of his book, Ben Sira gives the following final exhortation,

> Instruction in understanding and knowledge I have written in this book,
> Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sirach of Jerusalem, whose mind poured forth wisdom.
> Happy are those who concern themselves with these things, and those who lay them to heart will become wise.
> For if they put them into practice, they will be equal to anything, for the fear of the Lord is their path.[391]

Dividing these three verses into three separate parts of the epilogue and calling them respectively – v. 27: Introduction, v. 28: Main passage and v. 29: Closing passage, we can see the whole purpose of the book. Ben Sira starts with v. 27 introducing the book in three general words: 'παιδείαν συνέσεως' and 'ἐπιστήμης'. The general nature of these words does not give us any hint about the plot of the book. It is about 'instruction in understanding' and 'knowledge' of something which is yet to be defined. The second part of the same verse gives some biographical and personal information about the author of the book, 'I have written in this book, Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sirach of Jerusalem, whose mind poured forth wisdom'. We learn from this verse the name of the au-

389 R. J. Coggins, '*Sirach*', p. 95.
390 G. Von Rad, '*Wisdom in Israel*', p. 242.
391 Sir. 50:27–29.

thor and the place of his activity 'Jerusalem' as well as one characteristic feature of this person 'whose mind poured forth wisdom'[392]. It is v. 28 which discloses the precise theme of the book:

> Happy are those who concern themselves with these things, and those who lay them to heart will become wise.

Once more, happiness is underlined here to show that it is happiness that is the reason and incentive for all the instructions and knowledge. Wisdom is all about one's ability in being wise, having wise thoughts and thinking about things and realities differently or more deeply. Once the outcome of wisdom is put into action and the person obtains the fruits of his wisdom, he then feels all the power of his wisdom and becomes happy. The closing verse of this passage, v. 29, describes the results of putting 'παιδείαν συνέσεως' and 'ἐπιστήμης' into practice

> For if they put them into practice, they will be equal to anything, for the fear of the Lord is their path.

A close look at the Book of Genesis demonstrates that obtaining wisdom alone can sometimes even be dangerous. Joseph Blenkinsopp gives a very interesting interpretation of the Garden of Eden narrative in Gen. 1–11, saying that the sapiential character of this narrative is apparent.[393] Snakes are known to be represented in some Eastern myths and iconographies as bearers of secret knowledge and wisdom which they bring from the world beneath the earth. The Genesis story tells us that the mission of the snake was to give 'wisdom' to the first creatures so that they can know good and evil. As we can see, the tree from which Adam and Eve ate the fatal fruit was able to give wisdom. And as Blenkinsopp describes it, 'The implication is that the couple did in fact obtain wisdom, but a wisdom which brought on them the judgment of mortality'.[394] David Penchansky gives further development to this idea, presenting the serpent of the Genesis story as 'the first sage in the Bible'.[395] Penchansky's approach is discussed in more detail in my topic on the vocation of sages and scribes (4.2).

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392 A. Di Lella suggests that 'Ben Sira added these words himself, he was following the model of Prov. 1:1–3 and Qoh. 1:1, 12; 12:9–10; accordingly, he cannot be faulted for immodesty', cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 558–9.

393 J. Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 7–8.

394 J. Blenkinsopp, '*Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*', p. 8.

395 D. Penchansky, *Understanding Wisdom Literature: Conflict and Dissonance in the Hebrew Bible* (Michigan, Eerdmans, 2012), p. 15.

Another important prerequisite for happiness is love of the Lord which is sometimes used by Ben Sira synonymously with the fear of the Lord:[396] 'Those who fear the Lord do not disobey his words, and those who love him keep his ways. Those who fear the Lord seek to please him, and those who love him are filled with his law'.[397] 'Obeying the word' and 'keeping the ways' have the same meaning here, for whoever follows the commandments which is 'the word' also does not go astray from God's ways.

To demonstrate the importance of love of the Lord as one of the components which bring happiness, it is useful to have a look at another book in the wisdom literature, the Song of Solomon or Song of Songs. Solomon in general is presented in the Old Testament as an 'embodiment of royal wisdom'[398] whose wisdom was not surpassed in the entire East: 'People came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon; they came from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom'.[399] Among the books which are attributed to Solomon, the Song of Songs is probably the most distinctive in its style. Its uniqueness is seen even when compared with all other books of the Bible. The style in which it is written, the beautiful metaphors used in it to depict the overwhelming love that the two characters in it feel towards each other, make this book exceptional. But what is the core meaning of the Song of Songs? What is it that the author tries to convey to his readers? Is it just a picturesque erotic poem or something else?

> I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, and lodge in the villages; let us go out early to the vineyards, and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.[400]

In my view, this passage is an expression of ultimate happiness, so much praised by Ben Sira and elaborated on by Yakob Nalean. The Song of Songs is the last book ascribed to Solomon. Proverbs and Wisdom, which preceded in time the former, had already formed the idea of a perfect person whose final chord in life's symphony is the expression of his happiness and love in the Song of Songs. Unity with one whom you love is the reason of everything as there is no life without unity. There have been many approaches to the question concerning the iden-

396 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 78.
397 Sir. 2:15 – 16.
398 J. Blenkinsopp, '*Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*', p. 2.
399 1 Kgs. 4:34.
400 Song. 7:10 – 12.

tity of the persons who have the dialogue in the Song of Songs. The Christian interpretation is that the 'lovers' in this book are Jesus and His Church.[401]

Nalean interrelates the love of the Lord with keeping his commandments saying that it is not keeping His commandments that gives birth to love towards Him but the opposite: it is the love of the Lord that makes us keep His paths.[402] Connecting love of the Lord with unconditional trust in Him, Nalean says that all rewards as well as punishments must be accepted with a joyful heart and thankful mind as both rewards and punishments are expressions of God's love towards His creature.

> Որք երկիւղածք են եւ պարգեւի Հոգւոյն Սրբոյ ընդունակք ոչ լինին անհնազանդք բանից Աստուծոյ, եւ հրամանաց Նորա ոչ երկբային, ոչ յուսահատին ի փորձելն եւ ոչ փքանան ի պարգեւատրեն, այլ որոց ի նոցանէ եւ զի կացութեան եւ հանդիպին, յամենայնումում շնորհակալք լինին զնմանէ, զի զամենայն զոր եւ ընդունին ի մնանէ (եթէ շնորհս, եւ եթէ փորփութիւնս) զբոլորն պարգեւ համարին... Եւ Պօղոս ասէր, ուրախ եմ ընդ չարչարանս եւ ընդ նեղութիւնս, զի նեղութիւնք զհամբերութիւն գործեն: Այլ զի երկիւղացքն հնազանդին Աստուծոյ, որոյ ի հնազանդիլն յայտնին գոլ երկիւղածք, այսպէս եւ նշան սիրողաց նորա է պահպանութիւն ճանապարհաց նորա, զի Աստուած ոչ սիրի բանիւ միայն, այլ արդեամբք եւ ճշմարտութեամբք...[403]
>
> Orḱ erkiwłacḱ en ew pargewi Hogwoyn Srboy əndownakḱ očʿ linin anhnazandḱ baniċ Astowcoy, ew hramanaċ Nora očʿ erkbayin, očʿ yowsahatin i ṗorjeln ew očʿ ṗḱanan i pargewatren, ayl oroċ i noċanê ew zi kaċowṫean ew handipin, yamenaynowmowm šnorhakalḱ linin znmanê, zi zamenayn zor ew əndownin i mnanê (eṫê šnorhs, ew eṫê ṗorṗowṫiwns) zbolorn pargew hamarin... Ew Pôłos asêr, owrax em ənd čʿarčʿarans ew ənd nełowṫiwns, zi nełowṫiwnḱ zhamberowṫiwn gorcen: Ayl zi erkiwłaċḱn hnazandin Astowcoy, oroy i hnazandiln yaytnin gol erkiwłacḱ, ayspês ew nšan sirołaċ nora ê pahpanowṫiwn čanaparhaċ nora, zi Astowac očʿ siri baniw miayn, ayl ardeambḱ ew čšmartowṫeambḱ...
>
> Those who have fear and are able to receive reward from the Holy Spirit do not disobey the words of God, [they] are never hesitant in keeping His commandments, never get disappointed in temptation and do not boast when they are rewarded. But at the time of each [above mentioned], no matter in what kind of situation they are, they are thankful to Him because whatever they receive (either grace or temptation) they accept it from Him. ...And Paul said, '...but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance'.[404] As those who fear God humble themselves in front of Him and become known for their fear, so those who love Him keep His ways. For God is not loved merely by words but through deeds and truthfulness).

401 Hippołitos Boostracʿi, *Meknowtiwn Erg Ergocʿ* [Commentary on the Song of Songs] (Julfa, 1894), p. 67.
402 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 42v.
403 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 42v.
404 Rom. 5:3.

In this passage Nalean tries to define the major features of the fear of God. For him, the deeper meaning of the fear of God is not mere *fear*, but rather *fear* combined with *love*. Ben Sira lays the foundations for the deep connection between fear of the Lord and love of the Lord, saying, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of love for him',[405] and Nalean for the first time in Armenian biblical scholarship explains the human expressions of fear and love in a more empirical way. Also, drawing connections between all the verses of Sirach and the NT, Nalean underpins the authority of this book. For the Christians of 18th century Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, such as the Constantinople community, it was important to see the relationship between Sirach and the other books of the Bible, and in particular the NT, in order to be sure of the God-inspired nature of this book. Pancratius Beentjes draws out three verses in the closing chapters of the first part of Sirach which, in his words, have the 'crucial notion of phobos kyriou',[406] (Sir. 19:20, 21:11 and 23:27).

> The whole of wisdom is fear of the Lord, and in all wisdom there is the fulfilment of the law. (19:20)
> Whoever keeps the law controls his thoughts, and the fulfilment of the fear of the Lord is wisdom. (21:11)
> Those who survive her will recognize that nothing is better than the fear of the Lord, and nothing sweeter than to heed the commandments of the Lord. (23:27)

These verses are indeed crucial because they constitute the threefold theology of Sirach on wisdom, fear of the Lord and the law. In order to depict these three in a clearer way so as to see their interrelating nature and interdependence, it might be helpful to put them in the following circle diagram,

405 Sir. 25:12.
406 P. C. Beentjes, *Happy The One Who Meditates On Wisdom: Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira* (Leuven, Paris, Dudley: Peeters, 2006), pp. 91 – 4.

Nalean gives a profound explanation of the relationship between wisdom, fear of the Lord and love of the Lord, saying,

> Երկոցո զյանդիմանելին իմիտ բերելով զերկիւղն Աստուծոյ որ է սկիզբն իմաստութեան, զի վասն ոյր կրթի մարդ յօրենս Աստուծոյ, ոչ զեւէթ ոչ վասն սիրոյն գոնէ վասն երկիւղին Աստուծոյ զախտս մեղաց մեռուսցէ,[407]
>
> Erkoco zyandimanelin imit berelov zerkiwłn Astowcoy or ê skizbn imastowtean, zi vasn oyr krti mard yôrens Astowcoy, oč' zewêt oč' vasn siroyn gonê vasn erkiwłin Astowcoy zaxts mełać meṙowsċê
>
> Have fear for doing what is reproachable, having in your mind the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, for why does a person learn the law of God? If not by his love, at least by fearing God he will be able to cleanse his sins.

This is an interesting allusion to the Platonic philosophy according to which wisdom could also be gained through thinking about death. For Nalean the reason why Ben Sira gives so much importance to the fear of God as the fulfilment of wisdom is because 'նովաւ խորշի ամենայն ոք ի չարէ ներկայիս' [novaw xorši amenayn oǩ i č'arê nerkayis] (through it everyone abstains from the evil of the present [world]). Then Nalean gives an example of the fear of the Lord, saying,

> Ուստի եւ մանկունք գաւազանաւ գանին վասն ներկայի յանցանաց, զի զգուշասցին եւ յապառնի սխալմանէ, եւ անկասկածք լիցին ի պատժոյն: Քանզի խրատողն եւ յանդիմանօղն, երկիւղիւն Աստուծոյ յանդիմանելոց է, եւ ոչ յախտէ բարկութեան: Ոչ զի ինքն մաքրեալ իցէ ի յանցանացն' զոր դատէ ի յայլսն, զի ի թիւր քանոնէ ոչ ելանէ զիծ ուղիղ,[408]
>
> Owsti ew mankownǩ gawazanaw ganin vasn nerkayi yanċanaċ, zi zgowšasċin ew yapaṙni sxalmanê, ew ankaskacǩ liċin i patžoyn: Ǩanzi xratołn ew yandimanôłn, erkiwłiwn Astowcoy yandimaneloċ ê, ew oč' yaxtê barkowtean: Oč' zi inǩn maǩreal iċê i yanċanaċn' zor datê i yaylsn, zi i ṫiwr ǩanonê oč' elanê gic owłił
>
> For children are punished with a stick for their present faults in order to refrain from future mistakes, being aware of coming punishment. And also the person who exhorts and punishes must do it with fear of God and not as a result of his anger: he himself will not be cleansed from his sins when he judges others, for it is impossible to draw a straight line with a broken ruler.

We know that in the times of Nalean, punishment with a stick was not considered an inappropriate way of teaching, and for that very reason Nalean compares

407 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 377r.
408 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 377r.

the visual power of the stick which was hung on the wall of every classroom in his days, with the law of God as material expression of the Lord's commandments.

As we can see from what is said above, wisdom, fear of the Lord with love of the Lord, and the law, are so closely correlated in the book of Sirach that at some points it becomes impossible to differentiate where one ends and the other starts in the process of forming the *happy* person. Patriarch Nalean comes to help us to understand that in reality all these three important aspects of one's life must simultaneously draw the picture of his life 'զպատկերն կենաց', i. e. it is not that as a result of gaining wisdom one can cease fearing the Lord (loving him) or keeping his ways but he must consider all these as preconditions for his happiness.

4.2 The Vocation of the Sages and Scribes

In the times of Ben Sira and even long before him, the professions of a sage and a scribe were amongst the most honoured ones in Israel and the surrounding nations.[409] These professions were sometimes so similar in their functions, e. g. giving public speeches, teaching, etc., that it is almost impossible to put clear boundaries between the two. For example, Ben Sira describes himself as a scribe who has written 'instruction in understanding and knowledge'. Having the power to write a book of instructions makes him not less than a sage or a wise man, even though he describes himself as a scribe who devotes himself to the study of the Law of the Most High.[410]

An interesting passage in the Book of Jeremiah gives a certain idea of the primary task of a sage. Some people, who were against Jeremiah, gather and say, 'Come let us make plots against Jeremiah, for instruction shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet'.[411] This verse shows that the profession of a counsellor was allocated to those who were wise. On the other hand, it is not certain whether it is a sage who is called 'wise' here or a scribe. In this section of my thesis I shall examine the vocation of Ben Sira as simultaneously a scribe and a sage. I emphasize the 'scribe' part of his profession as Ben Sira himself does the same.[412]

409 G. Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World: Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud* (transl. I. Abrahams, Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 436–7.
410 Sir. 38:34b.
411 Jer. 18:18, cf. J. Blenkinsopp, '*Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*', p. 10
412 Sir. 38:24, 34b.

It turns out that in the Old Testament not all kinds of wisdom lead to prosperity. When we touched upon the subject of deceitful wisdom we already mentioned the Genesis narrative of creation where the knowledge brought by the serpent was not that of righteousness or piety. Going a step further David Penchansky says,

> The first sage in the Bible is the serpent who speaks to Eve in the Garden of Eden. The serpent is not Satan, or the devil, although Christians and Muslims have commonly interpreted the story this way. Rather, the text of Genesis says that the serpent is a 'wild animal that the Lord God made' (Gen 3:1). Why would the writer take pains to make this point about the serpent, unless to argue against someone who might have claimed the opposite, that the serpent is a divine or supernatural being? The writer of Genesis 2–3 insists that the serpent is not a supernatural being, but rather one of the animals.[413]

Penchansky believes that it is a wise beast which, like a sage who advises kings, gives advice to the first human beings.[414] I am partially in agreement with Penchansky's statement, although I would argue against his implication that the serpent told the truth to the first woman and that Adam and Eve did not die after eating from the tree. Penchansky's approach to the text of Gen. 2:17 is perhaps too literal. He pays attention to the fact that Adam's and Eve's eyes were opened after they ate of the tree, proving the truthfulness of the serpent. However he does not mention an important part of this story which is God's warning that the first humans will die if they eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent did not tell the truth, because after committing the sin of disobedience the first humans actually died in a sense, being expelled from the Garden i.e. from the presence of God. Nalean, talking about the wisdom of the ancestors relates Adam and Eve's story to it demonstrating that opening of the eyes meant inheriting death.

The first and foremost activity of the scribes was that of writing documents, often related to trade and negotiations between rulers of different countries, etc. For that reason they had a very prominent role in the court, to the extent that some classical Egyptian scholars considered the profession of a scribe to be the only profession in which one is free of a 'boss', unlike barbers, gardeners or those working in construction.[415] Ben Sira does not disclose entirely what the exact duties of sages and scribes in ancient Israel were. It is not even clear in Sirach whether the sages had identical functions with the scribes or

413 D. Penchansky, '*Understanding Wisdom Literature*', p. 15.
414 D. Penchansky, '*Understanding Wisdom Literature*', p. 15.
415 J. Blenkinsopp, '*Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*', p. 9.

not. He leaves it to his readers to make their implications over the course of reading his book. In this regard, the most helpful passage in Sirach, which can serve as a hint, is found in chs. 38:34 – 39:1 – 11 where Ben Sira illustrates not the professional skills but the individual qualities of a scribe as a person. He separates the scribes from the rest of society, stating, 'How different the one who devotes himself to the study of the law of the Most High!'[416] Nalean uses this verse to elucidate the meaning of Sir. 38:24 – 25 and to clarify the problem that commentators face in interpreting these two verses. He says that the word 'տարբեր' (different) means that a scribe who wants to pursue wisdom and happiness must change his life. He compares the two poems about the skilled worker (38:24 – 34) and the scribe (38:34b-39:11) and shows that those who do more physical work have to go beyond their present state, giving time for learning wisdom.

> Զմինն մարմնավոր եւ ծառայական, որպիսիք են ձեռագործական արհեստքն ի պէտս լրութեան մարմնոյ եւ զմինն հոգեւոր եւ տեսական որ խնդրէ զպարապութիւն ի ձեռագործաց, ոչ զի միտն անզբաղ ի նոսին պարապեսցի եւ մի՛ զինքն սպասաւորելով նոցա աղտեղացուսցէ... Չիք էին յանցանել գլխոջ ցուցելիքն, դարբնութեան, հիւսնութեան, բրուտութեան, երկրագործութեան եւ այլք: Իսկ կատարեալ իմաստութիւն, որ զպարապումն խնդրէ, է աստուածաբանութիւն, եւ փիլիսոփայութիւն, որք բոլորովին տեսականքն են, եւ զբարոյականն,[417]
>
> Zminn marmnavor ew caŕayakan, orpisiḱ en jeŕagorcakan arhestḱn i pêts lrowtean marmnoy ew zminn hogewor ew tesakan or xndrê zparapowtiwn i jeŕagorcać, oč՛ zi mitn anzbał i nosin parapesċi ew mi՛ zinḱn spasaworelov noċa ałtełaċowsċê... Č՛iḱ êin yanċanel glxoǰ ċowċeliḱn, darbnowtean, hiwsnowtean, browtowtean, erkragorcowtean ew ayliḱ: Isk katareal imastowtiwn, or zparapowmn xndrê, ê astowacabanowtiwn, ew p̣ilisop̣ayowtiwn, orḱ bolorovin tesakanḱn en, ew zbaroyakann
>
> The one is physical and empirical like the artisan's handiworks which are for fulfilling the needs of the body and the other is spiritual and theoretical which requires one to be free from doing manual work. And to be free not for vacating his mind for wicked indolence. There are not many things that a blacksmith, carpenter, potter or a cultivator have to ponder upon, but wisdom which comes through theology and philosophy requires freedom [from work].

We may assume that the 'leisure' that Ben Sira mentions in 38:24 is the time that anyone regardless of his social position can give to gaining the knowledge of wisdom. Blenkinsopp suggests that according to Ben Sira wisdom was for those in the *leisured* class and not for the working class. He quotes the following verses from Sirach to underpin his opinion,

416 Sir. 38:34b.
417 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 749r.

> The wisdom of the scribe depends on the opportunity of leisure; only the one who has little business can become wise. How can one become wise who handles the plough, and who glories in the shaft of a goad, who drives oxen and is occupied with their work, and whose talk is about bulls?[418]

However, Ben Sira could not attribute wisdom exclusively to those in the leisured class alone. On many occasions Ben Sira talks about all the unpleasant sides of the rich life. Those who overeat, drink too much wine; these were habits primarily belonging to the upper class in ancient times, as those who worked hard had not much to eat (31:20, 37:30). I would argue that Sirach's implication in these verses is that those who work too hard and spend all their time on thinking merely about material part of their lives, cannot think about higher realities and higher virtues such as wisdom or understanding. The root of this way of thinking, i.e. that earthly preoccupations do not let a person think about higher matters, can be found in Deut. 8:3 where Moses speaking to the people of Israel says that 'one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord'. Its reflection is also seen in Christianity from the very beginning of its establishment. In order to follow Jesus Christ, the first apostles had to leave their previous occupations; Simon and Andrew left their profession of fisherman to follow Christ, as did Matthew and others.[419] This does not necessarily mean that the apostles were from the 'leisured' class. Wisdom in the OT has sometimes been identified with Jesus Christ, and accordingly the means of following Jesus were sometimes identified with the ways of following or obtaining Wisdom.[420] Nalean, throughout his entire commentary also draws parallels between symbols and narratives from the OT with the life of Jesus. This early Christian approach to the biblical narratives actually lies at the roots of the exegetical tradition of the Armenian school of interpretation as well. St. Ełišê (5th c.), who wrote a commentary on the Book of Genesis, referred many times to the NT, trying to reach his Christian readers by showing the links between the two Testaments.[421]

Continuing the passage, Ben Sira describes the ideal type of a scribe who 'seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients, and is concerned with prophecies, preserves the sayings of the famous, and penetrates the subtleties of parables, seeks out the hidden meanings of proverbs and is at home with the obscurities of para-

418 Sir. 38:24–5.
419 Mat. 4:20, 9:9.
420 Cf. 1 Cor. 1:23–24.
421 Cf. Եղիշէ, [Ełišê] *Commentary on Genesis* (ed. Լ. Խաչիկյան [L. Xač'ikyan, Yerevan, 2004), pp. 199–203].

bles'.[422] Without these characteristic features a scribe could never become wise.[423] After obtaining alluring wisdom the scribe was ready to act in public. As Di Lella notices 'the contrast between the artisans of 38:25 – 34ab[424] and the ideal scribe of 38:34cd-39:11 are now seen as dramatic'. If an artisan in 38:33c was 'not found among the rulers' here in 39:4 he 'appears before them'.

Another important duty of a scribe was teaching. Ben Sira was definitely one of those teachers whose goal was to enlighten those who were uneducated: 'Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction'.[425] The education offered by Ben Sira was not limited merely to teaching the Torah or the skills of writing documents, but it also included 'the difficult art of finding the right way of looking at things in the midst of ambiguous phenomena and occurrences'.[426] Wisdom as given by Ben Sira implied the capacity for doing what is right in the sight of God and the ability to set the heart to rise early for the Lord.[427] Not less important in the life of a scribe was worshiping the Most High, as no-one could become wise unless he confessed his sins to God.[428] In conclusion to the above mentioned passage of 38:34cd-39:11, Ben Sira gives an overall picture of the reward that God will give to the scribe who has accomplished all his duties and responsibilities.

> If the great Lord is willing, he will be filled with the spirit of understanding; he will pour forth words of wisdom of his own and give thanks to the Lord in prayer. The Lord will direct his counsel and knowledge, as he meditates on his mysteries. He will show the wisdom of what he has learned, and will glory in the law of the Lord's covenant. Many will praise his understanding; it will never be blotted out. His memory will not disappear, and his name will live through all generations. Nations will speak of his wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim his praise. If he lives long, he will leave a name greater than a thousand, and if he goes to rest, it is enough for him.[429]

Even after being rewarded by the Lord and 'filled with the spirit of understanding' the ideal scribe persists with his mission letting his teaching fall like rain and his words descend like dew.[430] Nalean says that God sends His reward

422 Sir. 39:1 – 3.
423 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 451.
424 In NRSV version 38:34b corresponds to 38:34cd mentioned by Di Lella.
425 Sir. 51:23.
426 G. Von Rad, '*Wisdom in Israel*', p. 250.
427 Sir 4:12, 32:14,
428 Wis. 1:4 – 6, Ps. 51:8 – 9. Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 452.
429 Sir. 39:6 – 11.
430 Deut. 32:2.

only to those who are able to accept it (կարելոց). Referring to Solomon he points out that his entire life is a great example of a teacher:

> Որ մինչ սպիտակ էր անմեղութեամբ, լի էր իմաստութեամբ եւ կոչեցաւ սիրելի Աստուծոյ, եւ ի ծերանալն մեղօք եւ հասակաւ յիմարացաւ սիրով կանանցն, ըստ այնմ զայրացուցէր զԱստուած ի վերայ յիմարութեան...[431]
>
> Or minč̔ spitak êr anmełowt̔eamb, li êr imastowt̔eamb ew koč̔eċaw sireli Astowcoy, ew i ceranaln mełôk̔ ew hasakaw yimaraċav sirov kananċn, əst aynm zayraċowċêr zAstowac i veray yimarowt̔ean...
>
> Who in his young years being innocent was full of wisdom and was called 'beloved of Yahweh' because he led a righteous life but who at the end of his life went astray and became a fool, loving many women).

But he repented of all his transgressions calling them 'vanity of vanities'.[432] And as Nalean says: the most merciful God forgave him in order not to leave him making efforts [of repentance] without any result 'զի մի ունայն տքնեսցի'[zi mi ownayn tk̔nesċi].

In conclusion, Ben Sira's concept of a scribe or a sage clearly represents what was generally understood and accepted in Ancient Israel. Constant study of the Law of the Most High and the Prophecy of the ancients alongside the Fear of the Lord constituted the significant attributions of a scribe. In addition, it was divine intervention that was of most importance. God's reward, as Nalean puts it, 'Հաճոյաբար շնորհիւ զնա լցուցանէ եւ արիական պարգեւօք եւս փարթամացուցանէ'[433] [Hačoyabar šnorhiw zna lċowċanê ew jriakan pargewôk̔ ews p̔ar̔tamaċowċanê](Fills him [the scribe] with a pleasurable grace and develops with giving gratifying gifts). In other words, the Almighty's reward was not given only after completion of the scribes' duties but rather by being in a cyclical process of obtaining and giving wisdom and knowledge, the scribe was in a constant relationship with the Creator.

4.3 Creation, Free Will and Sin

For Ben Sira, God is for 'all flesh' and is not limited merely to being the God of Israel alone.[434] This idea of treating well those outsiders who do not descend

431 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 754v.
432 Ecc. 1:2.
433 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 753v.
434 Sir. 18:13.

from any of the twelve tribes of Israel is found in Jewish history as well. The consideration that everyone is made by one God and has the right to be treated appropriately is found in 1 Kings 30. An Egyptian man appears in front of David and his soldiers and the first thing that David does is to feed this person who was not even from his nation. Only then does David start asking questions concerning the man's identity. This understanding of universal equality under one Creator, and accordingly God's ability to reach His every creature, dominates Ben Sira's theology on God. '...the compassion of the Lord is for every living thing. He rebukes and trains and teaches them, and turns them back, as a shepherd his flock'.[435] Nalean compares the two parts of the verse 18:13, 'The compassion of human beings is for their neighbours' and 'the compassion of the Lord is for every living creature'. He says that sometimes human beings are not fully able to express love and compassion to everyone. Instead they love their friends and relatives, considering this to be righteousness. Considering a sinner as an enemy of Christ, Nalean says that even for them God has a great compassion. He never punishes anyone but rather He waits until the day of the Great Judgment,

> Զնոյն առնէ եւ Քրիստոս, տալով մեզ ի կերակուր զմարմին եւ զարիւն իւր, զի մի ի սովու սատկիցեմք, զի յաւուր դատաստանին իրաւամբք զմեզ դատապարտիցէ եւ մի զսովն պտճառեսցուք,[436]
>
> Znoyn aṙnê ew K̔ristos, talov mez i kerakowr zmarmin ew zariwn iwr, zi mi i sovow satkiċemk̔, zi yawowr datastanin irawambk̔ zmez datapartiċê ew mi zsovn ptčaṙesċowk̔
>
> Likewise does Christ by giving us his body and blood as food so that we do not die from starvation. [He does this] in order to judge us justly on the day of the Judgment and so that we cannot bring starvation as an excuse).
>
> The one and only God knows about everything done by His creatures but He still waits for a sinner to return to a righteous path.
> For great is the wisdom of the Lord, he is mighty in power and sees everything; his eyes are on those who fear him, and he knows every human action.
> He has not commanded anyone to be wicked, and he has not given anyone permission to sin.[437]

This last statement refutes those sinners who try to reconcile themselves to their own wickedness, by thinking that God has created them as they are and that it is impossible for them to change. Maurice Gilbert describes aptly the sinner's atti-

435 Sir. 18:13.
436 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 351v.
437 Sir. 15:18 – 20.

tude toward his own faults saying, 'The objection is put in two forms: "From God (comes) my sin" (15:11a) and "It is he who trips me up". Human moral evil, "my sin", is in question. The opponent thus acknowledges the perversity of his doing, but he makes God liable for it, and this means that he excludes his own responsibility'. [438] Gilbert clarifies Ben Sira's statement that God does not need a sinner: the fact that sin's existence is not indispensable excludes the possibility of the evil being planted in human beings by the Creator. The two verses, Sir. 15:15–16, indicate, first, that God is the Creator of everything 'He has placed before you fire and water' and second, that human beings are free to choose either: 'If you choose, you can keep the commandments...stretch out your hand for whichever you choose'. The free will of a person is never limited by God. One can compare the triangular relationship of God-man-commandments with a newly born child which needs constantly to be nurtured and educated to avoid being harmed first by himself and then also by the environment. In the same way God in creating human beings showed them His will through His commandments so that those who obey them could be eternally protected. Both in Christianity and in Islam, as well as some other religions, bad things are considered to happen because of the devil or other evil powers. Ben Sira's implication here, though, is that sometimes a human being can hurt himself even without being attacked by Satan. Nalean gives a rather descriptive metaphor comparing the commandments with a lit lamp in one's hand which, in Nalean's words, '...ի գիշերի կենցաղոյս, պահեսցեն եւ նոքա զքեզ զի մի անկցիս ի խորխորատ' [...i gišeri kenc̣ałoys, pahesc̣en ew noǩa zǩez zi mi ankc̣is i xorxorat] (in the night times of life will keep you from falling into a pit). Then Nalean describes in four points all the benefits of obeying God's will saying,

> Ուրեմն, որ հաւատարմաբար պահէ զօրէնս Աստուծոյ, նախ ի մշտնջենաւորս զանուն հաւատարմի եւ հաճոյական ծառայի Աստուծոյ ստանայ որպէս հաւատարիմ աւանդապահ, զաւանդն ի Տեառն ամբողջ հասունացնելով: Երկրորդ, որ պահէ զպատուիրանս Աստուծոյ հաւատարմաբար , եւ Աստուած մնայ ի խոստումն իւր հաւատարիմ մինչեւ յառաքել Որդի իւր Յիսուս բնակիլ ընդ մարդկան ըստ աղօթելոյն Սողոմօնի Գ Թագ. ը:իզ: Քանզի հաւատարիմ է Աստուած և ոչ զոյ ի մնա անիրաւութիւն եւն: Երրորդ, եթէ պահիցէս զպատուիրանս Աստուծոյ հաճելի առնես նմա զհաւատն քո, զի զի՞նչ օգուտ հաւատալն զԱստուած նման դիւաց առանց սիրոյ եւ հաւատալ բանից նորա թե են բանք Անստուծոյ ըստ չարագործաց եւ ոչ հաւատալ

438 M. Gilbert 'God, Sin and Mercy: Sirach 15:11–18:14' in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2002), p. 119, cf. Sh. Burkes, God, Self, and Death: The Shape of Religious Transformation in the Second Temple Period (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 79.

սիրելով զնա որ է հաւատալ զԱստուած ըղձունակ սիրով: Չորրորդ՝ որ պահէ զպատուրանս Աստուծոյ, առնու ի նմանէ զինչ եւ հայցէ, որպես թե զարկղն իւր լի Աստուած իցէ յանձնեալ, եւ յաւանդիցն իւրոց առնու զինչ եւ որք կամի:[439]

Owremn, or hawatarmabar pahê zôrêns Astowcoy, nax i mštnǰenawors zanown hawatarmi ew hačoyakan caŕayi Astowcoy stanay orpês hawatarim awandapah, zawandn i Teaŕn ambołǰ hasownaċnelov: Erkrord, or pahê zpatowirans Astowcoy hawatarmabar , ew Astowac mnay i xostowmn iwr hawatarim minč῾ew yaŕaǩel Ordi iwr Yisows bnakil ənd mardkan əst ałôťeloyn Sołomôni G Ťag. ə:iz: Ǩanzi hawatarim ê Astowac ew oč῾ goy i mna anirawowťiwn ewn: Errord, eťê pahiċês zpatowirans Astowcoy hačeli aŕnes nma zhawatn ǩo, zi zi ̊nč῾ ôgowt hawataln zAstowac nman diwaċ aŕanċ siroy ew hawatal baniċ nora ťe en banǩ Anstowcoy əst č῾aragorcaċ ew oč῾ hawatal sirelov zna or ê hawatal zAstowac əǰownak sirov: Č῾orrord՝ or pahê zpatowrans Astowcoy, aŕnow i nmanê zinč῾ ew hayċê, orpes ťe zarkłn iwr li Astowac iċê yanjneal, ew yawandiċn iwroċ aŕnow zinč῾ ew orǩ kami

Thus, whoever faithfully obeys God's Law, first, he earns forever the name of a loyal and pleasing servant of God and when [whatever good he deposited] comes back to him multiplied by God. Second, for those who faithfully obey the commandments of God, God will keep His promise to dwell in them until the arrival of His Son Jesus, according to the prayers of Solomon (3 Kings 8:26).[440] For loyal is God and in Him there is no deceit. Third, if you keep God's commandments, you make your faith pleasant for Him. For what is the benefit of believing in God like demons or believing that His words are the words of God without loving him? Four, whoever obeys God's commandments, receives from Him whatever he asks as if God had given him the box of the things [the person] deposited. And takes whatever he wishes from it.

Nalean's continuous emphasis on free will is vividly demonstrated throughout this passage. Each sentence starts with 'whoever ...obeys God's Law' or 'Commandments'. The most substantial part of this passage, though, is the third point which is presented in the second person 'you'. It underlines Ben Sira's whole idea of keeping the Lord's commandments as a sign of free will, 'If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice... He has not commanded anyone to be wicked, and he has not given anyone permission to sin'.[441]

The corollary of this statement is that God in Sirach is a righteous God and has planted a particle of His righteousness and goodness in human beings. It is entirely laid on humans whether they will keep the Almighty's will or choose to

439 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 310v.

440 In 3 Kgs. 8:26 which is 1 Kgs. 8:26 in NRSV Solomon says, 'Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you promised to your servant my father David'. In this verse Solomon asks God for His will to be done. Nalean tries to demonstrate here both the free will of Solomon and his obedience to God.

441 Sir. 15:15, 20.

do the opposite.[442] For Nalean, after all the generous gifts of God, the normal response from his creatures should be 'Երկիւղիւ գալ առ Արարիչն իւր, զարդարեալ իմաստութեամբ' [Erkiwłiw gal aṙ Ararič'n iwr, zardareal imastowťeamb] (Coming near to their Creator girded with wisdom).

Another interesting question is, how are sinners punished? Shannon Burkes, in a book published almost a decade ago, discusses some major religious issues related to the Second Temple period. An interesting passage in his book is devoted to divine interaction with humanity: God's response to sinners. Burkes' analysis on Ben Sira's rather ambiguous attitude toward the time of a sinner's punishment suggests that although God punishes the sinner, He does not specify the time of the punishment as in the NT.[443] It is clear that the punishment is inevitable, 'for both mercy and wrath are with him, and his anger will rest on sinners' but whether it is going to happen immediately after committing sin or on the death bed is not clear.

> Ben Sira admits that God, for a variety of possible reasons, is not engaged in an immediate way, at all times, with the flow of human events, which suggests that the author has not quite regressed, as is sometimes argued, to a naïve, pre-Joban belief that God is in the heavens and all is right with the world.[444]

I would take issue with one point in this statement of Burkes' – the suggestion that for Ben Sira 'God is not engaged in an immediate way, at all times, with the flow of human events'. In the beginning of his fifth chapter, Ben Sira addresses his speech to a sinner exhorting him not to boast for the fact that he has not yet been punished for his sins 'Do not say, "I sinned, yet what has happened to me?"'[445] or 'His mercy is great, he will forgive the multitude of my sins'[446]. Ben Sira alludes here that God is always keeping His eye on a sinner 'for *suddenly* the wrath of the Lord will come upon you'.[447] If we follow Burkes' assertion that Divine intervention in human lives is partial, then a question of justified punishment of human beings can arise. In reality 'ἐξάπινα' in Sirach means that God's penalty will not make a sinner wait. It will just happen at a time

442 Cf. M. Gilbert 'God, Sin and Mercy: Sirach 15:11 – 18:14', p. 123.

443 S. Burkes, '*God, Self, and Death*', p. 90 – 3, cf. 2 Thes. 1:9 'They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power'.

444 S. Burkes, '*God, Self, and Death*', p. 93, cf. Cf. G. Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1972), p 238.

445 Sir. 5:4.

446 Sir. 5:6.

447 Sir. 5:7.

when the sinner is not even thinking about it, i.e. "I sinned, yet what has happened to me?".

4.4 God

Although there are no extended, systematic doctrinal discussions on God presented in the OT, statements scattered through it give a vivid idea of the accepted theology on God in the times of Ben Sira. No doubt, being a zealous bearer of Jewish tradition, Ben Sira followed the theology on God found in both Torah and Naviim. For instance, Ben Sira in a different format clearly conveys the same idea of the omnipotence and oneness of God found in Deut. 6:4 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone'.[448] The same idea is put forward by Ben Sira as a prayer to God in which he asks God to show His might to other nations as well, so that they know as the Jews do that 'there is no God but you'.[449] A more precise parallel to Sir. 36:1–5 is found in 1 Kgs. 8:23–43, where Solomon uses an almost identical formula of prayer in addressing his plea to God. Ben Sira starts his prayer by calling upon the name of God and supplicating for the Lord's mercy, 'Have mercy upon us, O God of all...'. In a similar way, Solomon says 'O LORD, God of Israel... O hear in heaven your dwelling place; heed and forgive.'[450] Then Ben Sira asks God to show His might and power to all other nations urging God to lift up His hand '...to show your glory'. Solomon's almost identically-worded prayer invokes God's immediate action in front of foreigners to make them hear 'your [God's] great name, your mighty *hand,* and your outstretched arm'. He also emphasizes the fear of God which is such an important point for the entire book of Sirach: 'so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you'.[451] The concluding verse of Ben Sira's prayer 'Then they will know, as we have known, that there is no God but you, O Lord' might also have its root in a similar verse of a Davidic Psalm or in Solomon's prayer, '...so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel'.[452] As John Snaith clearly notes, the only difference found in Sirach's passage which differentiates it

448 Cf. A. Di Lella 'God and Wisdom in the Theology of Ben Sira' in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2002), p. 5.
449 Sir. 36:5.
450 1 Kgs. 8:23, 30.
451 1 Kgs. 8:43.
452 1 Kgs. 8:43.

from other similar OT passages is that in his prayer Ben Sira does not praise the Lord or give thanks to Him: 'He may either have selected the passage himself or have used a liturgical source; but such anthological style lacks life and the poem lacks the variety of tone and mood familiar in the Old Testament psalms: it is all request and no thanksgiving'.[453]

God is one and He has power to 'destroy the adversary'[454] and 'crush the heads of hostile rulers'.[455] Throughout the entire OT, God punishes the wicked in order to reveal His power to those who follow Him. Nalean's statement regarding this point is that 'զի բարի առնէ բարեաց վասն սիրելոյ այսպէս եւ ի սիրոյ պատժէ զչարս զի լուսաւորեալք զինքն ճանաչիցեն' [zi bari aṙnê bareaċ vasn sireloy ayspês ew i siroy patžê zč'ars zi lowsaworealk' zink'n čanač'iċen] (As He [God] does good to the righteous, because of love, in the same way he punishes those who are evil so that lightened they may know Him). Nalean applies to God the title 'Մատուցիչ լուսոյ' [Matowċič' lowsoy] (Bearer of light).[456] In fact, God's accomplishment as 'Bearer of light' is seen in many accounts of the history of the Israelites. In the book of Exodus, God appears to the people of Israel and to the Egyptians in the shape of a cloud which comes and lights up the night.[457] The cloud though, does not light the hearts of the Egyptians and even causes all the chariots and the army of Pharaoh to sink in the sea. God shows His power but the Egyptians do not accept Him as *God of all*. However, it is fascinating that the Egyptians recognize the mighty power of the Lord: 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt'[458] but as Jeremiah says, they are like those foolish and senseless people 'who have eyes, but do not see'.[459] The Book of Psalms interestingly divides those who do not know YHWH and those who do not call on His name, 'Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name',[460] i. e., despite the fact that Egyptians recognized God, they did not beseech the Lord for His mercy and in result they were destroyed. Nalean goes back to his combination of Fear and Love of the Lord, which we considered earlier, asserting that even those who fear the Lord and know that He is the only God in the Universe,

453 J. Snaith, Ecclesiasticus: or The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 174.
454 Sir. 36:9.
455 Sir. 36:12.
456 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 644r.
457 Ex. 14:19 – 30.
458 Ex. 14:25.
459 Jer. 5:21.
460 Ps. 79:6.

but do not fear because of their love towards the Almighty, will not receive His mercy.

> Քանզի աստէն ոչ զորդիական երկիւղէն խօսի որ է պարգեւ Հոգւոյն Սրբոյն այլ ծառայական երկիւղէն որ բռնի խոյս առնել տայ ի չարէն, վասն խստութեան պատժոյն, որով յակամայ կամաւ ամբարիշտն ճանաչէ զանծանօթն Աստուած՝ ծանօթական պաժովքն: Ումն մելամաղձոտ վասն բորբոքման ուղեղանն զուղն կորուսեալ ասէր զինքենէ ոչ ունել ըզգլուխ: Բժիշկքն զկապարեայ գդակ մի շինեալ ազուցին ի գլուխն, որ զուղեղն ցրտացոյց և զծանրութիւն զգացոյց և խոստովանեցաւ թե այո, ունիմ զգլուխ,[461]
>
> Ǩanzi astên oč՝ zordiakan erkiwłên xôsi or ê pargew Hogwoyn Srboyn ayl caŕayakan erkiwłên or bŕni xoys aŕnel tay i č՝arên, vasn xstowťean patžoyn, orov yakamay kamaw ambarištn čanač՝ê zancanôťn Astowac՝ canôťakan pažovǩn: Omn melamałjot vasn borboǩman owłełann zowłn korowseal asêr zinǩenê oč՝ ownel əzglowx: Bžiškǩn zkapareay gdak mi šineal agowċin i glowxn, or zowłełn ċrtaċoyċ ew zcanrowťiwn zgaċoyċ ew xostovaneċaw ťe ayo, ownim zglowx
>
> For a person who does not have filial fear towards God which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, fears as a slave just for the sake of escaping the punishment, because a wicked person knows the unknown God through the known means of punishment. A melancholic person driven mad because of fermentation of his brain says that he does not have a head. The doctors make a hat from lead and put on his head. After getting cold and feeling a heaviness on his shoulders the person finally admits that he has a head).

It is already well established how much Ben Sira emphasises the pursuit of wisdom. 'Search out and seek, and she [Wisdom] will become known to you'.[462] At the same time, to show the contrast between God's power and the limitations of human beings he underlines that only God can have complete wisdom, 'All wisdom is from the Lord'.[463] Human beings are never able to comprehend wisdom in its entirety and hence Ben Sira adds, 'Neither seek what is too difficult for you, nor investigate what is beyond your power'.[464] This does not mean however that a person must never try to seek wisdom. Ben Sira merely warns about the dangerous result of studying beyond one's capacity. As Burkes suggests, to avoid falling into a heresy, Ben Sira 'is advising a focus on the law and avoidance of mysterious or esoteric knowledge'.[465] Patriarch Nalean insists on diligently studying whatever has already been revealed and not going beyond it to create 'new theology and a new god':

461 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 644r.
462 Sir. 6:27.
463 Sir. 1:1.
464 Sir. 3:21.
465 S. Burkes, '*God, Self, and Death*', p. 102.

> Առ չափաւոր իմաստութիւնսն ոչ է պարտ պղերգանալ ճշմարիտ իմաստասիրացն, զորօրինակ ոչ զկնի անկանել առ ի գտանել ինչ յԱստուած եւ յաստուածայինսն զնոր ինչ ոչ յայտնեցեալ ի յաստուածային Սրբազան Գրովք, այլ որ ինչ յայտնեցելոք են խոնարհութեամբ քննել, զոսկրն սբ. Գրոցն ոչ բեկանելով.
>
> Aŕ č'aṗawor imastowťiwnsn oč' ê part płerganal čšmarit imastasiraćn, zorôrinak oč' zkni ankanel aŕ i gtanel inč' yAstowac ew yastowcayinsn znor inč' oč' yaytneċeal i yastowacayin Srbazan Grovŕ, ayl or inč' yaytneċelaŕ en xonarhowťeamb ŕnnel, zoskrn sb. Groćn oč' bekanelov
>
> Those who are truly wise must not be indolent in seeking for reasonable wisdom. For example, it is not right to make endless efforts in order to find something new about God or Divine matters which are not written in the Holy Scripture, but [it is right] to study the things which are revealed, not breaking the bones of the Holy Scripture (not speculating on the things written in Bible).

In other words, a person's effort to seek wisdom through obeying the Lord's commandments is seen by Ben Sira as enough to obtain it. Seeing their endeavour to find her, Wisdom herself gives help to those who seek her.[466] Of course, the Wisdom that is personified here comes from the Lord and thus, it is God who stretches out His arm to those who want to draw near to His Wisdom. In my view, Ben Sira's entire theology about God is anchored in the tradition of Hebrew Torah and Prophecy. He 'regards the ultimate font of wisdom to be God'[467] but parallel to this, he does not deny the possibility of human beings acquiring wisdom, if they do not cease to be strong in the Lord.

4.5 Retribution

Oliver Rankin characterizes Ben Sira's theology of retribution as purely Deuteronomistic according to which the afterlife does not exist.[468] Di Lella cites the following verses, while he demonstrates that according to Ben Sira, 'human beings must seek their complete meaning and fulfillment only during the present life'.[469]

466 Sir. 4:11.
467 S. Burkes, '*God, Self, and Death*', p. 106.
468 O.S. Rankin, *Israel's Wisdom Literature: Its Bearing on Theology and the History of Religion* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936), pp. 77 – 80, cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 83 – 4.
469 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 84.

> Give, and take, and indulge yourself, because in Hades one cannot look for luxury. All living beings become old like a garment, for the decree from of old is, "You must die!"[470]

I have already given above my view as to why Ben Sira does not speak about recompense after death or about afterlife in general. This is because the whole deuteronomistic theology on retribution was all about relationship with YHWH in *this* world. However, we must bear in mind that this does not necessarily mean Ben Sira was not aware of or did not believe in the existence of an afterlife. Rather, he chooses only to utilise the idea of punishment in this world. Rankin ascribes this view to the entire OT, saying:

> ...neither does the Old Testament, in spite of new attainments of thought in regard of suffering and responsibility, out grow the Deuteronomist theory of recompense; nor does later Judaism, with the now wider vision of a belief in a future life, dispense with the main features of its teaching.[471]

It has been rightly said that Ben Sira was painfully aware of the injustice that a sinner could live a very happy and wealthy life up until his death.[472] Knowing this, he warns the wicked to be aware that the Lord's judgment can happen unexpectedly.

> Do not say, "I have enough, and what harm can come to me now?" For it is easy for the Lord on the day of death to reward individuals according to their conduct.[473]

Ben Sira realizes that even the idea of punishment on the day of one's death is not enough to reprove sinners and so he presents the idea of retribution with fire and worms:

> Humble yourself to the utmost, for the punishment of the ungodly is fire and worms.[474]

Interestingly, the original Hebrew text does not give any specific indication as to the time of the punishment, i.e. it is unclear whether Ben Sira is speaking about present or afterlife reality. This could be a way of keeping sinners in fear of being punished for a long time, 'զի դարձ քո անդրէն է. զի նա այսօր՝ եւ դու վաղիւն երթայցես' [zi darj ko andrên ê. zi na aysôr՝ ew dow vałiwn erťayċes]

470 Sir. 14:16–7.
471 O.S. Rankin, '*Israel's Wisdom Literature*', p. 83.
472 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Lella, 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira', p. 84.
473 Sir. 12:24, 26.
474 Sir. 7:17.

(for yours is like it, yesterday it was his, and today it is yours).[475] The Zôh. text goes one step further, adding to 'հուր եւ որդն' [howr ew ordn] (fire and worm), two adjectives which change the whole scenario of retribution: 'յաւիտենական, անմահ' [yawitenakan, anmah] (eternal and immortal). Thus, instead of just fire and worms there will be 'eternal fire and immortal worms' in which a sinner will be punished.[476] The Bag. translation of this verse does not have any reference to everlasting punishment. In fact, the use of fire and worm alongside each other is not a coincidence itself. Nalean separates the two means of punishment: temporal 'ժամանակաւոր' [žamanakawor] and eternal 'յաւիտենական' [yawitenakan]. The first one happens on earth, when as a parasite, the sin, after it is committed, tortures the sinner from inside and eats him, while the everlasting fire will burn the sinner forever. '...բարկութիւն ...առաւել քան այլոց' ինքեան բարկացողին վնասէ, զի է որդն ծնեալ ի բնութեան բարկացողին'[477] [...barkowtiwn ...aṙawel ǩan ayloc' inǩean barkaċołin vnasê, zi ê ordn cneal i bnowtean barkaċołin] (Anger... more than anyone else harms the one who gets angry, for the worm is born from the nature of the angry person). The eternal fire will be like the furnace alluded to by Ben Sira in 2:5 in which gold is tested and separated from other kinds of metals mixed with it. Sinners will see in what state they could have been, had they repented in time and turned to God, and will be overwhelmed by sorrow. Making a connection with the NT motif of the banquet, Nalean adds that sinners will hear the sound of the celestial party but will not be allowed to attend it, because their sins will cover their souls as soot covers and darkens the walls '...որպէս հուր սեւացուցանէ զորմն ծխով իւրով'.[478] [...orpês howr sewaċowċanê zormn cxov iwrov] Nalean is careful not to confuse his idea of burning in the furnace and temporarily cleansing from soot with the doctrine of Purgatory. He mentions that there is no salvation for a sinner 'արդարոցն կեանք յաւիտենական եւ մեղաւորացն տանջանք յաւիտենական' [ardaroċn keanǩ yawitenakan ew meławoraċn tanǰanǩ yawitenakan] (Eternal life for the righteous and eternal torture for sinners). Possibly influenced by GII, eternal punishment and afterlife receive explicit mention in the Armenian translation. For example v. 2:9 states, 'Երկիւղածք Տեառն ակնկալարո՛ւք բարւոյ, եւ ողորմութեան եւ ուրախութեանցն *յաւիտենից*' [Erkiwłacǩ Teaṙn aknkalaro՛wǩ barwoy, ew ołormowtean ew owraxowteanċn yawiteniċ] (You who fear the Lord, hope for good things, mercy and *everlasting* joy). A. Di Lella does not agree that the

475 Sir. 38:21, Arm. Zôh. 38:22 – 23.
476 Cf. Is. 66:24 '...for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched'.
477 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 139v.
478 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 140r.

word 'everlasting' refers to the afterlife, but in Armenian 'յաւիտենից' [yawitenic̣] can mean nothing else but eternity and thus incorporates an understanding of the afterlife.

Based on what has been said, we can conclude that Ben Sira warns his readers not to continue in sin, in reliance only on the Lord's endless mercy. God can show His wrath at times most unexpected by the sinner, even on the day of his death. It is indeed uncertain from what he writes, whether Ben Sira is really talking about everlasting punishment or whether he just leaves open a window for such an implication. Thus, it is not appropriate to draw any categorical conclusions as to Ben Sira's belief or otherwise in an afterlife.

4.6 Prayer, Worship

The whole concept of prayer or worship in Sirach is very complex. His knowledge of prayer as well as his attitudes to Temple rituals have led some scholars to suggest that Ben Sira may well have been a priest himself.[479] Stefan Reif in his weighty article summarizes the central liturgical content of Sirach, citing some major passages related to prayer in the Hebrew original of the book, and providing English translations of those passages. He concludes that 'Ben Sira had a high opinion of the Temple and the priesthood and a strong conviction of their central role in Jewish religious practice'.[480] The scope of Ben Sira's prayer includes not only the relationship of individuals with God, but also reflects the relationship between individuals themselves. In fact, a person's prayers will hardly ever be heard by the Lord if he has not yet done his duties towards his fellow creatures.

> Those who honour their father will have joy in their own children,
> and when they pray they will be heard.
> Do not avert your eye from the needy, and give no one reason to curse you: for if in bitterness of soul some should curse you, their Creator will hear their prayer.
> Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray.[481]

479 R. J. Coggins, '*Sirach*', p. 49. Cf. Stefan C. Reif, 'Prayer in Ben Sira, Qumran and Second Temple Judaism: A Comparative Overview' in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2002), p. 322.

480 Stefan C. Reif, *'Prayer in Ben Sira, Qumran and Second Temple Judaism'*, pp. 324–35.

481 Sir. 3:5, 4:6, 28:2.

The process of worship does not start with the actual time of praise to the Lord but starts long before it, and does not end with the final words of the prayer. Accordingly, we can distinguish between three stages of worship according to Ben Sira: first, preparation; second, actual prayer; and third, the post-prayer period. Now, let us discuss each of these stages in turn.

First, as stated before, a person's prayer is supposed to be preceded by actions which demonstrate his merits and his worthiness to be accepted by the Lord. Furthermore, nothing can be initiated by human beings regarding worship unless it is desired or commanded by God. J. Snaith in his valuable article underlines this idea, stating, 'Interest in social justice and inner personal devotion tends to predominate, and where sacrificial worship is commended it is commended because God has commanded it. Observance of the Torah covers both practical social action and ceremonial ritual'.[482] An idea resembling this can be found in Psalm 51:15, 'O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise'. The Psalmist in his prayer of forgiveness conveys the same concept of God being the initiator of prayer and also the one who gives the power to pray. Nalean's interesting approach is that God never wants to be praised by a sinner; rather he wants to be glorified by a cleansed person. To illustrate his thought, he uses the example of Diogenes who, after being praised by some wicked people says, 'Սի գուցէ զչար ինչ արարեալ իցեմ, զի չարէ, որ ի չարեաց գովի',[483] [Mi gowċê zč'ar inč' arareal iċem, zi č'arê, or i č'areaċ govi] (I am sadly afraid that I must have done some wicked thing, for evil is the one who is praised by the wicked).[484] Nalean says that similarly, God does not want to hear words of praise from the mouths of those who have not yet atoned for their sins. Similarly, St. Paul and one of his companions on their way to a place of prayer met a slave-girl, who praised them even though she was possessed by an evil spirit. The girl spoke the truth, 'These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation', but it was not pleasing for St. Paul. In return for her praise, Paul turned to her and cast out the demon in her.[485]

> Զի թէպետ Աստուած կամի գովիլ ի մէնջ, այլ ոչ զի փառաւորեսցի, այլ զի մեք զգին գոհար ականն ճանաչեսցուք, եւ հրամանի նորա հնազանդիցուք, ապա

482 J. Snaith, 'Ben Sira's Supposed Love of Liturgy' in *Vetus Testamentum Vol. 25* (Brill, 1975), pp. 167 – 74. Cf. W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 88.

483 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 306r.

484 Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (trans: C.D. Yonge, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), [http://www.classicpersuasion.org/pw/diogenes/dlantisthenes.htm#N_1_], Revised 11.02.2013.

485 Acts 16:16 – 18.

թէ ոչ լսեմք, զի՞ կոչէք զիս Տէր, Տէր, եւ զոր ասեմս ոչ առնէք, եւ թէ ժողովուրդս այս շրթամբք պատուէ զիս,[486]

Zi ťêpet Astowac kami govil i mênǰ, ayl oč' zi ṗar̄aworesċi, ayl zi meḱ zgin gohar akann čanač'esċowḱ, ew hramani nora hnazandiċowḱ, apa ťê oč' lsemḱ, zi՞ koč'êḱ zis Têr, Têr, ew zor asems oč' ar̄nêḱ, ew ťê žołovowrds ays šr̄ťambḱ patowê zis

For even though God wants to be praised among us, [He wants so] not to be simply glorified but for us to recognize the price of the precious jewel and to obey his command. If not, then we will hear 'Why are you calling me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say' 'These people honour me [only] with their lips').[487]

Throughout his commentary on Sir. 15:9–10 Nalean tries to clarify that not all the praises of sinners disgust God, and if the praise is preceded by a plea of forgiveness and compassion 'Ձայն զղջման ի սրտէ' [Jayn złǰman i srtê] then it is greatly pleasing to the Lord.

The one whose service is pleasing to the Lord will be accepted, and his prayer will reach to the clouds. The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and it will not rest until it reaches its goal; it will not desist until the Most High responds.[488]

After teaching the part of preparation through various examples Ben Sira proceeds to his instructions on the actual prayer of praise. 'One of the reasons, in fact, that the book of Ben Sira is as long as it is, might be that Ben Sira lived up to the advice which he gives in 43:30'[489] i.e. 'Glorify the Lord and exalt him as much as you can, for he surpasses even that'. Dispersed at many points throughout chapters 1–43, Ben Sira exhorts the reader to pray hard or to give thanks to the Lord as well as to remember those in need[490], but starting from ch. 43 up until the end of the book Ben Sira solely emphasizes the praise of the Lord and describes those righteous people whose praises have been accepted by the Almighty. Portraying the everlasting glory of God, Ben Sira states, 'We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: "He is the all"'.[491] Even after being purified from sins and being capable of praising the Lord, we do so not because God Himself wants to be glorified but first and fore-

486 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 306v.
487 Cf. Is. 29:13.
488 Sir. 35:20–21.
489 J. Liesen, "With all your heart': Praise in the Book of Ben Sira' in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2002), p. 199.
490 Sir. 7:10, 35:20
491 Sir. 43:27.

most because human beings want to praise him, to some extent making a return to God for his compassion and mercy.

> Զնա գովելով եւ դրուատելով. ոչ նմա զփառս յաւելուլ կարեմք, այլ զբիւր երախտեաց փոխարէնն մեր պարտուց հատուցանեմք, զի ոչ փառաւորի փառաւորեալն, վասն առաւելութեան փառացն: Զի ընդ որ զարեգակն գովէ, ոչ զնա ճոխացուցանէ եւ փառազարդէ, այլ զինքն տեսօղ եւ երախտագէտ ցուցանէ,[492]
>
> Zna govelov ew drowatelov. oč' nma zṗar̄s yawelowl karemḱ, ayl zbiwr eraxteaċ ṗoxarênn mer partowċ hatowċanemḱ, zi oč' ṗar̄awori ṗar̄aworealn, vasn ar̄awelowṫean ṗar̄aċn: Zi ənd or zaregakn govê, oč' zna čoxaċowċanê ew ṗar̄azardê, ayl zinḱn tesôł ew eraxtagêt ċowċanê
>
> We cannot add anything to His glory praising and lauding Him, but we do it in lieu of atonement of our sins. For the already greatly glorified[493] cannot be again glorified. Whoever praises the sun does not make it more splendid and glorious but through doing it he demonstrates himself to be a thankful person).

Apart from being thankful to God, human beings also show their recognition that He is the only God and that they are *faithful* to Him. In return for their recognition and faithfulness, God, as it is said in 1 Samuel 2:9, 'will guard the feet of his faithful ones' 'հաւատացելոց'. It can be seen in the entire theology of praise given by Ben Sira that there is also another reason why people praise the Lord, i.e. through their praise others see the greatness of the Lord. The visible creatures glorify the invisible One. Ben Sira uses the examples of the great ancestors of the Jews who in spite of their own greatness praised the Greatest so that ordinary people could be inspired by their example and could imitate them. Ben Sira first enumerates righteous people by their different professions: those who ruled in their kingdoms, those who gave counsel because they were intelligent, those who spoke in prophetic oracles, those who composed musical tunes, or put verses in writing, rich men endowed with resources, [494] etc., and connects them with one common merit. The feature which united all these people was that they all were godly and righteous 'whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten'.[495] According to Nalean, they all were theologians, as through them God spoke or acted on earth. Ancient Greek philosophers, as the Patriarch puts it, had a loose understanding of God: they were not theologians because

492 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 847rv.
493 Nalean here refers to 2Cor. 3:10 'Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the *greater glory*'.
494 Sir. 44:1–10.
495 Sir. 44:10.

their knowledge of God was not generated through their praise but through mere logic and uninspired 'անոգէշունչ' wisdom.[496]

In other words, the true theologians are those who experience what they write or say, who through their prayer receive revelation of the truths about God and genuine 'իսկական' wisdom. Representing the famous ancestors of the Jews as such 'true theologians', Ben Sira encourages the reader to follow their steps and to give thanks to the Holy One, the Most High, proclaiming his glory.[497] Ben Sira defines prayer and praise of the Lord not as routine tasks which need to be undertaken by human beings in general and by the Jews in particular. His aspiration first and foremost is to turn the process of praying and praising into a lifestyle. In order to do so, it is crucial to live the third, post-prayer period in accordance to the same principals of the preparation and the period of the actual prayer. To make his idea more tangible Ben Sira invokes the excellence and honour of the great ancestors. In this regard it is worth quoting Edward Beavin's remark on the ongoing praise of God, 'Just as all God's works testify to his power and praise him through their obedience, so Israel – in a sense the climax of God's creation... praises him through her life'.[498]

It is clear from what is said above that Ben Sira considers prayer and worship in general as an ongoing process of life or as life itself which is not limited to mere formulaic expressions. Putting it in Nalean's words, prayer has manifold 'բազմաբիւր' [bazmabiwr] aspects which from a variety of perspectives form an ideal person and create in him the virtues which Ben Sira is declaring throughout his book as the ways of inheriting and being filled with joy and glory.[499]

4.7 Social Justice

This brings us to another topic which is extensively addressed by Ben Sira: social justice. As seen in the previous passage on worship, Ben Sira's view on the role of prayer in the lives of human beings is very complex. It involves an ongoing praise of the Lord, who opens the hearts of those who praise and gives knowledge to understand reality:

496 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 848rv.

497 Sir. 47:8.

498 E. L. Beavin, 'Ecclesiasticus or The Wisdom of Jesus The Son of Sirach' in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible: Including all the books of the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, together with forty-three General Articles* (ed. C. M. Laymon, London and Glasgow: Collins, 1972), pp. 550–76.

499 Sir. 4:12–3.

> And they will praise his holy name,
> to proclaim the grandeur of his works.
> He bestowed knowledge upon them,
> and allotted to them the law of life,
> so that they may know that they
> who are alive now are mortal.[500]

As an outcome the praise or prayer directs the ways of the pious people to the truth.[501] However, that journey towards the truth is not an isolated process but rather it implies openness to other human beings and care for them.

> Stretch out your hand to the poor,
> so that your blessing may be complete.[502]
>
> With all your might love your Maker,
> and do not neglect his ministers.[503]

Firstly, he makes it clear that princes, rulers and other highly ranked officials regardless of their position are equal to every other member of society.

> The prince and the judge and the ruler are honoured,
> but none of them is greater than the one who fears the Lord.[504]

A noteworthy nuance is that Sirach addresses his speech first to the princes and rulers and only after that to the ordinary people.

> Give a hearing to the poor, and return their greeting politely.[505]

The Armenian as well as the Greek version have 'Խոնարհեցո զունկն քո...' (incline your ear...) at the beginning of this verse which, as Nalean suggests, alludes to the officials who proudly walk by the poor without even noticing them. Nalean says that inclining your ear to the poor does not necessarily mean to help by giving money or other means of material support, but its primary meaning is to equate yourself to them, sitting next to them and just listening to their problems.[506]

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500 Sir. 17:9–11.
501 Sir. 37:15.
502 Sir. 7:32.
503 Sir. 7:30.
504 Sir. 10:24.
505 Sir. 4:8.
506 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, pp. 847rv.

> Բայց մեծագոյն շնորհ է աղքատին եթէ մեծատունն երկայնութեամբ ունկն դիցէ նմա, եւ սփոփեսցէ գոնէ բանիւ մխիթարութեան, որպէս Սուրբն Պետրոս եւ Յովհաննէս ասացին յերովայնէ մօրէ կաղին. որ նստէր առ գեղեցիկ դրան տաճարին, թէ. զարծաթ եւ ոսկի ոչ ունիմք, բայց զոր ունիմք, տացուք քեզ, յանուն Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի արի և գնա: Ահա այս է բան մխիթարութեան...
>
> Bayċ mecagoyn šnorh ê ałkatin eṫê mecatownn erkaynowṫeamb ownkn diċê nma, ew sp̣opeśċê gonê baniw mxiṫarowṫean, orpês Sowrbn Petros ew Yônannês asaċin yerovaynê môrê kałin. or nstêr aṙ gełeċik dran tačarin, ṫê. zarcaṫ ew oski oč̣ ownimk̆, bayċ zor ownimk̆, taċowk̆ k̆ez, yanownn Yisowsi K̆ristosi ari ew gna: Aha ays ê ban mxiṫarowṫean...
>
> But the greatest favour for a poor person is when an official gives ear to him and comforts him if only with a word of consolation, as Sts. Peter and John did to the man lame from mother's womb, who was sitting at the beautiful gates of the temple. [They said] we have neither silver nor gold but we will give you what we have, 'In the name of Jesus Christ stand up and go'. This is a word of consolation.

Di Lella describes the orphans, widows, the poor and oppressed in the Bible as religiously privileged and protected persons.[507] Indeed, many biblical references (e. g. Lev. 19:9 – 11. Prov. 19:17, Job. 29:11 – 16, Tob. 1:3 etc.) attest to the paternal care that God shows to those who are underprivileged – to the extent that God does not listen to the prayers of those who do not help the poor.[508] Nalean's approach to social justice is rooted in the Genesis narrative of creation which, as he puts it, is a prophetic message addressed to human beings, exhorting them to look after not only the flora and fauna, by subduing them, but also to provide care for those who are in need of their support. He regards the poor and oppressed as a part of the 'inheritance' which is given to more fortunate people. Nalean then links Sirach's exhortation with the statement in the NT where Jesus says 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me',[509] and asserts that Sir. 7:32 and Prov. 21:13 together with the above mentioned Mt. 25:45 form a holistic approach with the entire Bible regarding social justice. For Nalean social justice is based first and foremost, on the equal rights for every member of a society. In his famous poem, which I mention in my introduction, Nalean implicitly speaks about the unhealthy social situation present in the society of his time.

> Մեծացի՛ր անձն իմ խղճալի,
> Ի բարութեանց լեալ ի բաց,

507 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', p. 167.
508 Prov. 21:13.
509 Mt. 25:45.

Յումմէ՞ յուսաս գրութիւն‘
Բարեպաշտօն չի մնաց...

Իսպառ բարձեալ են իրաւունք,
Ընդ նոցին սուտ տարածեալք,
Առ մեծամեծս և առ ստրուկս‘
Ճշմարտութիւն չի մնաց...

Եղբայր-եղբօր դժկամակի,
Իբր ընդ օտարս ունելով,
Ընկերն ընկեր ջանայ զրկել,
Սէր ընկերի չի մնաց...[510]

Mecaċir anjn im xłčali,
I barowťeanċ leal i baċ,
Yowmmê yowsas growťiwn‘
Barepaštôn č‘i mnaċ...
Ispař barjeal en irawownk̆,
Ənd noċin sowt taracealk̆,
Ař mecamecs ew ař strowks‘
Čšmartowťiwn č‘i mnaċ...
Ełbayr-ełbôr džkamaki,
Ibr ənd ôtars ownelov,
Ənkern ənker ǰanay zrkel,
Sêr ənkeri č‘i mnaċ...]

Grow up, my miserable soul!
Being far from kindness,
From whom are you hoping
to get a letter?
There is no righteous man left.

Rights are entirely taken away
Whilst lie is spread instead,
Both among the rich and among the slaves,
There is no truth left.

Brother complains against his brother,
As if he does so against a stranger.
Friend tries to deprive his friend,
There is no love left for a friend.

Whilst allegorically addressing this poem to his soul, Nalean is actually issuing a warning to his people, in his role as Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople and representative of a nation. The verse of Sirach which inspired Nalean to write this poem both comforts those oppressed under foreign rulers, and also exhorts the

510 MM. MS N. 2696, pp. 72v-73r.

people to be humble and righteous as arrogance and injustice are detrimental to society.

God commands His creatures to stretch out a hand to all those who are in need. Mt. 25:45 reveals that everything done to the latter is done for God and vice versa. Then, Prov. 21:13 attests to God's attitude towards social injustice reaffirming that one cannot deserve the Lord's graciousness if he himself does not do the same to others. As a conclusion of this approach, Sirach (7:32) warns that even if a person fulfils all other requirements and still lacks helping the poor, his blessing will not be complete. This affirmation of Sirach together with Hos. 6:6 could have been one of the sources of Christ's famous statement that 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice'.[511] In his article on justice in the Wisdom of Solomon, Yehoshua Amir formulates the concept of Rabbinic Judaism on social justice in one phrase 'measure for measure'[512] calling this the best contribution of Rabbinic literature on this subject. The idea of 'measure for measure' is described as 'with what measure a man metes, with it will *one* mete for him'. God is the 'one' who will mete for men. The truthfulness of this concept is attested in Num. 14:34 where Israelites rebel against God and Moses and therefore are condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Nalean again points out the twofold essence of social justice by connecting a pious life with almsgiving as the only way of atonement.

> Եթէ վասն քաւութեան մեղաց պատարագ մատուցանես, եւ կամ վասն ընկալեալ բարեացդ զխաղաղական զոհս նուիրես յայնժամ զքաւութիւն մեղաց, եւ զշնորհակալական օրհնութեան նուէրն կատարես. յորժամ եւ զաղքատս անտես չառնես, զի որ ասացն թէ զպատարագ մատո, նոյն եւ ասաց թէ յեղբօրէ կարօտելոյ զակն մի՛ դարձուցաներ...[513]
>
> E'tê vasn k'awow'tean mełać patarag matowćanes, ew kam vasn ənkaleal bareać'd zxałałakan zohs nowires yaynžam zk'awow'tiwn mełać, ew zšnorhakalakan ôrhnow'tean nowêrn katares. yoržam ew załk'ats antes č'ar̄nes, zi or asać'n 'tê zpatarag mato, noyn ew asać 'tê yełbôrê karôteloy zakn mi´ darjowćaner...
>
> If for the sake of repentance you offer a sacrifice or for your own goodness you give a gift of peace, you fulfil the [requirements] of forgiveness of sins and of giving a gift of a thankful blessing. At the same time you must not neglect the poor as He who told [you] to offer a sacrifice, also told [you] not to neglect a brother who is in need.

511 Mt. 12:7.

512 Y. Amir, 'Measure for Measure in Talmudic Literature and in Wisdom of Solomon' in *Justice and Righteousness: Biblical Themes and Their Influence* (eds. H. G. Reventlow, Y. Hoffman, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,), pp. 29–46.

513 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 159v.

As a loyal follower of the Jewish heritage, Sirach bases his theology of justice and righteousness on the prophetic tradition of Israel. He leaves no space for his readers to circumvent the law or other writings of the Bible. Like the prophets of Israel he is a bitter accuser of 'people who think they can satisfy Yahweh by observing the ritual and liturgical symbols and get around the commandments of Yahweh in their treatment of others and their attitude toward poverty'.[514] Rabbi Akiba illustrates the importance of almsgiving in one sentence 'God placed the poor on the earth in order to save the rich from hell'.

Thus, the theology of Sirach on social justice (ընկերային արդարութիւն) [ənkerayin ardarowt'iwn] takes as its point of departure the principle that a righteous life in front of the Lord does not imply merely living your own life with no consideration of others even if you order your daily course according to sensible norms. Furthermore, if a person sins then the easiest way of gaining forgiveness is by stretching out a hand to those deserving of pity, for 'He who told you to offer a sacrifice, also told you not to neglect a brother who is in need'.[515]

4.8 Attitude towards Women

The complexity of Sirach's attitude towards women does not allow us to generalise about his opinion on this subject, or to simplify it to a positive or negative view on women. Not much research has been carried out specifically on this question. From the very few studies available, the more notable are the one by Andrew Bruce Davidson[516] and another by Henry McKeating.[517] Because of the brevity of these articles though, they both lack an overall analytical approach to the subject. It was in the beginning of the 1980 s when Warren Trenchard published his doctoral dissertation called 'Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis' in which he not only thoroughly discussed the hypotheses which had been put forward before him, but also came to his own conclusion that Sirach's personal attitude toward women is negative. For a more systematic analysis of the material, Trenchard classifies women into five groups: women as good

514 W. Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (tr. D. E. Green, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), p. 133.
515 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 159v.
516 A. B. Davidson, 'Sirach's Judgment of Women' in *Expository Times No. 6* (1894 – 95), pp. 402 – 4.
517 H. McKeating, 'Jesus Ben Sira's Attitude to Women' in *Expository Times No. 85* (1973 – 74), pp. 85 – 7.

wives, as mother and widow, as bad wife, as adulteress and prostitute, and as daughter.

> Clearly the most problematic category is the good wives. To the casual reader this material appears to be positive regarding women. As we have seen, it is sometimes taken to be so positive that some scholars find it baffling that Ben Sira can at other times be so negative. Scholars have often pointed to this material as evidence that Ben Sira is not personally negative towards women. But as we read Ben Sira's remarks about the good wife more carefully, we found that he does not discuss her as an independent entity. Instead sees her only in relationship to her husband.[518]

Trenchard then goes on to present all the other categories of women as being viewed negatively by Ben Sira. He especially stresses the category of adulteress and prostitute with a remark that, unlike in other cases, Sirach's attitude here is not unique but shares the common legal and wisdom traditions of Israel. Although on the whole I am in agreement with Trenchard, I would submit that his argument relies too heavily on the *negative* aspect of the book, at times deliberately omitting or misinterpreting certain verses which evidently represent some categories of women in a more balanced way. For instance, when speaking about parents and the honour that children ought to show them, Sirach makes a very obvious distinction between the father and the mother, treating the mother separately rather than presenting her as one entity together with the father, as argued by Trenchard.

> For the Lord honours a father above his children, and he confirms a mother's right over her children.
> Those who honour their father atone for sins, and those who respect their mother are like those who lay up treasure.
> Those who honour their father will have joy in their own children, and when they pray they will be heard.
> Those who respect their father will have long life, and those who honour their mother obey the Lord.[519]

The Zôh. translation has 'Փառաւոր առնէ զմայր իւր' որ պատուէ զնա, եւ ուրախ լիցի յորդիս իւր'.[520] [P̄arawor ar̄nê zmayr iwr' or patowê zna, ew owrax liċi yordis iwr] (He who honours his mother makes her glorified and he will have joy in his children). According to this text it is for honouring one's

518 W. C. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis* (California: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 168.
519 Sir. 3:2 – 6.
520 Sir. 5 – 6 in Zôh.

mother that one will find joy in his own offspring, and not for honouring the father. Box and Oesterley even state that the mother's right or due must be equally respected as with the father's right. Without doubt, we can say that Ben Sira was a pure representative of the patriarchal society of his days where women were not seen as having much of a role apart from maintaining the daily needs of the household, including looking after their female children (we must note here that boys were taught by the teachers such as Ben Sira himself, and this is why Ben Sira's intended audience is male).[521] Therefore, it has been suggested, that Trenchard's argument is based on his own negative attitude towards Sirach and not the negative attitude of Sirach toward women. 'Trenchard gives the impression that Ben Sira would have written differently about women if only he were less biased toward them and had more pleasant experience with them. Such an attitude toward Ben Sira is not only wrong but wrongheaded'.[522] Commenting on Sirach's attitude towards women and mothers in particular, Nalean presents multiple reasons why they must be honoured: first because of their wise counsels; second: together with fathers they are a reason of one's existence; and finally, they are their children's conscience which always guides them according to the ways of righteousness, at the same time keeping their minds far from wrongdoing.

Linking this to the so-called misogynistic statements of Ben Sira e. g. 25:13 – 26, 42:13 – 14, where he speaks very critically of women, one can see that his book in its entirety is not a polemic against women but on the contrary that it has an excessive emphasis on those kinds of women who are troublemakers. According to Trenchard's assertion, Ben Sira is relatively positive only towards women who are mothers. He does not sufficiently take into consideration that Ben Sira's teaching, though it might seem strange and misogynistic to a modern Western reader, would not appear so to the people of his own days. Furthermore, Ben Sira makes it clear in 36:28 that on the character of a woman depends her husband's fortune in life: 'If kindness and humility mark her speech, her husband is more fortunate than other men'. An interesting connection can be drawn between Ben Sira's exhortations on women and the exhortation found in Prov. 31:2 – 3: 'No, my son! No, son of my womb! No, son of my vows! Do not give your strength to women, your ways to those who destroy kings'. What catches ones attention here is that it is no one else but his mother, queen Bathsheba, who teaches Solomon and tells him about those women who can turn one's

521 Sir. 9:3, 16:24, etc.

522 W. Skehan, A. A. Di Llla, '*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*', pp. 90 – 2.

heart aside to them and cause him to 'be plunged into destruction'.[523] In other words, it is a female representative of the society who speaks about other females. And also, this is said in a book which more than any other Biblical text has influenced Ben Sira's work. 'Կինն ոչ այնքան սանձահարիլ պիտի, զի թուիցի աղախին, եւ ոչ այնքան սանձարձակ զի թուիցի տիրուհին'[524] [Kinn oč՝ aynk՛an sanjaharil piti, zi t՛owiċi ałaxin, ew oč՝ aynk՛an sanjarjak zi t՛owiċi tirowhin] (A woman should not be restrained to appear like a slave and not too released to appear like a mistress). In a rather interesting way, Nalean proposes to keep equality between men and women, and states that Sirach points out all those dangers that can be caused by wicked women whilst at the same time praising those qualities of women which 'դառնան դարման կենաց' [darn̄an darman kenaċ] (become the remedy of life).

In a Jerusalem MS at St. James' depository there is a 17th century Armenian poem called 'Տաղ վասն կանանց' [Tał vasn kananċ] (Poem on Women). Three verses of this lengthy poem touch upon Sirach's attitude towards women and clearly illustrate the generally moderate position of Sirach.

Բանք Սիրաքայ Իմաստասիրի
Գեղեցկութեան կնոջ ասի,
Քան զոսկի խարիսխ լինի
Սիւն ի վերայ կանգնեալ լինի:

Կին լեզուանի նման գազանի,
Ով հանդիպի կու պատառի,
Վայ էր երկան նմա դիպի,
Քան զոչխար գազան ընկնի:

Սիրաք խելօք կինն գովէ,
Քան զարեգակ նման ասէ,
Երնեկ երկան նմա դիպէ,
Զօրն ցորեկ լուսով պահէ:[525]

[Bank՛ Sirak՛ay Imastasiri
Gełeċkowt՛ean knoǰ asi,
K՛an zoski xarisx lini
Siwn i veray kangneal lini:
Kin lezowani nman gazani,
Ov handipi kow pataṙi,
Vay êr erkan nma dipi,
K՛an zoč՛xar gazan ənkni:
Sirak՛ xelôk՛ kinn govê,

523 Sir. 9:9b.
524 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 506v.
525 Jerusalem MS N. 976, 17th c., 224v.

Ḵan zaregak nman asê,
Ernek erkan nma dipê,
Zôrn ċorek lowsov pahê]

Words of Sirach the Wise,
Tell that beauty of a woman,
Is better than gold, is anchor,
On which she stands as a pillar.

A talkative woman is like a beast
Whoever meets her gets torn
Woe to a man who touches her
Like a sheep falls into the snare of the beast.

Sirach praises a wise woman,
Calling her 'bright like the sun',
Happy is the man who touches her
And is kept in the light as in the daytime.

To conclude our passage, it is obvious that Ben Sira is addressing himself to a male audience, and therefore he indicates those qualities of women which can often be deceitful and can become a 'secret anxiety for their father', etc. It is an exaggeration to state that Ben Sira was entirely misogynist and that the reason why he does not mention Ruth and Esther in his book but speaks about all other books of the OT is erroneous.[526] He does not mention the prophecy of Daniel either, which shows that there was another reason besides gender why Ben Sira omitted mention of Ruth and Esther as well as Daniel. Ben Sira as a teacher of life and not only of academic disciplines, tried to protect his students as they embarked on the new phase of their lives. This is why of the 105 verses (or 7 per cent of the text) of Sirach which deal with women almost two thirds are warnings and exhortations on keeping away from *wicked* women.

526 V. H. Matthews, J. C. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), pp. 275 – 6.

5 Conclusions

The issues addressed in this study concern the Armenian translation of Sirach as well as the only Armenian commentary on this piece of wisdom literature, written by Yakob Nalean. This is the first comprehensive research undertaken on the subject of the Armenian Sirach, and as such the current work has needed to establish the role of Sirach in Armenian biblical tradition and the extent of its use. The first task has been to resolve the ambiguities which arise from the canon lists of the council of Partaw, as well as the introduction to Zôhrapean's edition of the Bible, which[527] have caused some scholars to give a very late date for the translation of Sirach and its circulation within the Armenian ecclesiastical environment. Through enquiry into the textual value of Armenian Sirach this study has had a goal to define the place of the Armenian translation within the wider scholarship of Sirach as well. The necessity of carrying out such work is clearly evident: even a cursory reading of the works of the leading Armenian and western academics in the field reveals a lack of coherent approach toward the Armenian translation in general, and in particular of a close textual or inter-textual analysis of the Armenian text in particular.

Also, due to unfair negligence of the commentary of Yakob Nalean on Sirach, presumably because of its size or a misconception regarding its exegetical value, this work has been waiting for centuries to be rediscovered and adequately examined. Within the scope of this dissertation Nalean's interpretation was widely used and commented on. Especially, the commentary was abundantly quoted in the last chapters of the second section when investigating the main theological themes and motives of Sirach.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is in regard to the dating of the first Armenian translations of Sirach. This research indicates that the book of Sirach has never been alien to the canon of the Armenian Bible as assumed by a few scholars, such as N. Połarean, in their works based on somewhat ambiguous assertions. The results of this research support the theory that Sirach was translated into Armenian in the first half of the 5th century by Mesrop Maštocʻ and his disciples.

There are no direct studies of any of the issues concerning the Armenian Sirach. The only three articles written on the subject were triggered by the findings

527 Yôvhannês Zôhrapean's [Յովհաննէս Զօհրապեան] assertion is that the linguistic style of Sirach suggests that it was neither translated by the Holy Translators (Sahak and Mesrop) nor even by their youngest disciples, but dates from the earliest to the 12th C. Later, this argument was adopted by N. Połarean in his article in Sion.

of portions from chs. 42–46 in 1927 and 1966.[528] A few additional paragraphs addressing the Armenian text of Sirach in passing can be found in the works of some western authors.[529] However, none of these studies has been sufficiently comprehensive. The present work was conducted not only to meet this need but also to create a platform for an urgently needed critical text of Sirach in Armenian. It has also accomplished its aim to generate as large amount of data on the Armenian text of Sirach as possible.

The first half of the thesis has chosen the following issues as targets of study:

- To collect and examine all existing works which touch upon the subject of Armenian Sirach
- To date the earliest Armenian translations
- To ascertain the place of Sirach in the Armenian Bible and tradition
- To establish the textual evidence for the parent texts of the Armenian translations
- To examine the four unique passages which are found nowhere else but in the Armenian text
- To examine the text of the newly found chapters 42–46 and the portions from chs. 1–4 and 18–20 the existence of which had not been known until 1927

The aforementioned goals have been achieved in view of the scholarly treatments of Armenian Sirach existing prior to this thesis. Also, all the printed editions of Sirach in Armenian as well as ancient and medieval references to Sirach have been taken into consideration, while attempting to establish the approximate form of the initial Armenian translation. Each of the topics addressed in this thesis has its own conclusion which describes the contribution of that passage to the study of Sirach's text in Armenian. Thus, various aspects of the conclusion were developed throughout the entire work.

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528 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grkin hin targmanowtenên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 246–50], Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության նորահայտ հատվածներ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan norahayt hatvacner' in *Etchmiadzin No. 11–12,* (Etchmiadzin, 1966), pp. 60–70], Cf. Գ. Աբգարյան, Սիրաքի գրքի հնագույն թարգմանության առթիվ [G. Abgaryan, 'Sirak'i grk'i hnagowyn t'argmanowt'yan aṙt'iv' in *Etchmiadzin No. 2,* (Etchmiadzin, 1968), p. 62].

529 The most remarkable ones are those of H. Herkenne, '*De Veteris Latinae Ecclesiastici*', pp. 28–33, S. Lyonnet, '*Les Origines de la Version arménienne et le Diatessaron*', p. 11, 149 and J. Ziegler, '*Sapientia Jesu Filii Sirach*', pp. 33–6.

Turning to the aims and questions above, as seen in first half of the thesis, not much has been elaborated by scholars on the Armenian text of Sirach, notwithstanding that it is one of the earliest translations of this book. Interestingly, Western scholarship has touched upon this subject relatively more than Armenian scholarship. On the other hand, those Western scholars who had a glance at the Armenian text have predominantly done so through examining its parent texts. It must also be mentioned that their assessments were not always accurate. For example, in the renowned edition of Robert Charles's 'Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament', G. Box and W. Oesterley classify two versions of the Armenian translation of Sirach: one based on Old Latin and the other on Greek Septuagint. They not only erroneously mention Old Latin, overlooking that the source of the earliest translation is in fact Syriac, but they also underestimate the textual value of the second recensed Armenian translation, based purely on the omission of some verses and chapters from the latter.[530] Almost all other scholars, including S. Lyonnet, J. Ziegler, R. Smend, etc. have based their opinions on the study of Heinrich Herkenne,[531] who states that it is all but impossible to a great extent to identify one clear source for the Armenian translation.

Nevertheless, as I showed in the chart (2.10), in several cases it is indeed possible to make a clear distinction between those parts influenced by Greek and those based on the Syriac. Good examples for this study are Sir. 1:29 in the Zôhrapean text and the different readings in Bagratowni and Zôhrapean texts in the case of Sir. 2:1 which demonstrate the two distinctive sources of the translation. Taken together, these results indicate that an in-depth textual analysis of the entire Armenian translation of Sirach would be able to go a long way in determining the extent to which each of the two sources has been utilised.

It has also been demonstrated in this thesis that Sirach was indubitably translated in the first half of the 5th century together with the other books of the OT. I have put forward an argument in favour of the early translation of Sirach, contrary to the assertions of Norayr Połarean and Yôvhannês Zôhrapean that this book was translated not earlier than the 12–14th cc. or even the 17th c. when it was included in the Amsterdam edition. In his paragraph dedicated to the Canon list of the Armenian Bible, Movsês Xorenac'i does not clearly state exactly which books of the Old Testament are included in the canon. A tentative conclusion can be drawn from his mention of the '22 known ones' which appa-

530 Box, G., Oesterley, W., 'Sirach' in *Apocrypha of the Old Testament Vol. 1* (*ed. R. Charles*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p. 291.

531 H. Herkenne, '*De Veteris Latinae*', pp. 28–32.

rently echoes the 22 books of the HB. On the other hand, Koriwn who wrote his famous biography of Mesrop almost forty years before Movsês Xorenacʻi when the active process of translation was still underway is not so explicit in his remarks on the canon. He mentions only the first and the last subdivisions of both testaments, 'Moses, the law-giver, along with the order of the prophets, energetic Paul with the entire phalanx of the apostles'[532] which leaves room for many different interpretations. However, the remnants of the Syriac influence in the Zôhrapean text and in some MSS allow us to suggest that a translation from Syriac was definitely produced by the first translators of the 5th century. Then, only after the Caesarean version of the Greek text was brought to Armenia, was it combined in recension with the newly brought translation. It is known that soon after the new translation from the Greek text was done, the Pʻowtʻanaki translation was gradually withdrawn from wide use[533] and hence only some verses have been preserved in the text of Sirach.

The existence of a translation of Sirach from Syriac is already strong testimony that this book was translated not later than the 5th century, a point which Zôhrapean and Połarean do not examine. Furthermore, even if we leave aside this obvious factum concerning Syriac and place our emphasis solely on the translation from Greek, we can still demonstrate that Sirach's earliest Armenian translation belongs to the hands of the first translators of the 5th century. Contrary to Zôhrapean's and Połarean's positions regarding the date of the earliest translation, Arsen Bagratowni and Emil Kautzsch hold to a hypothesis that the style of the Armenian text is very close to that of the Greek text and thus it was translated in an earlier period.[534] Nevertheless, Dowrean, after examining his findings of 1927, came to the conclusion that even if there was a translation in the 5th century, it was done not by the earliest translators and not even by their disciples but by their later followers.[535] To underpin his assertion Dowrean pointed out some words in Classical Armenian which did not resemble similar words in the earliest translation of the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs etc.

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532 Կորյուն, Վարք Մաշտոցի [Koriwn, '*Vark Maštocʻi*', p. 104].

533 Հ. Անասյան, Հայկական մատենագիտություն [H. Anasyan, '*Haykakan Matenagitowłyown*', pp. 311–12].

534 E. Kautzsc, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudeptgraphen des Alten Testaments, B 1* (Tubingen, 1900) p. 249. Cf. Գիրք Աստուածաշունչ Հին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց [Girkʻ Astowacašunčʻ Hin ew Nor Ktakaranacʻ (ed. A. Bagratowni, Venice, 1860), pp. 681–704].

535 Ե. Դուրեան, Նորագիւտ գլուխներ Սիրաքայ գրքին հին թարգմանութենէն [E. Dowrean, 'Noragiwt glowxner Sirakay grkin hin tʻargmanowtʻenên' in *Sion* (Jerusalem, 1927), p. 246].

However, 40 years after the Jerusalem discovery of the unknown chapters, Matenadaran MS 5608 was proved to contain the same chs. 42–46, and it was revealed that these chapters do not contain the obscure words found in the Jerusalem MS. Rather, the style as well as the vocabulary used in the translation were very similar to the other biblical translations of the early 5th century. My own study of the quotations from Sirach to be found in ancient Armenian texts, both those composed in Armenian and those translated from other languages, as well as the examination of the two 20th century discoveries of the Jerusalem and Yerevan Matenadaran texts, have shown that the translation found in the latter is a copy of an early 5th century MS.

From the first decades of the establishment of Armenian patristic literature, Sirach has been held in high esteem by the majority of ecclesiastical scholars. One of the most striking similarities between Armenian Sirach and a 5th century translation of a homily of St. John Chrysostom, discussed for the first time in this study, clearly demonstrates that in the first half of the 5th century there was already in existence a copy of Sirach's text in Armenian to which the translator of St. John's homilies referred when quoting from Sirach. Sir. 25:33 in the Grabar text, which corresponds to 25:25 in the NRSV, is a lucid example of close textual resemblance between the 5th century text of Sirach and a reference to this book in Chrysostom's homily 'On Virginity': 'Ի կնոջէ սկիզբն մեղաց եւ վասն նորա մեռանիմք ամենեքին' [I knoǰê skizbn mełać ew vasn nora meřanimk̆ amenek̆in] (In a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die). Similar verses bearing such resemblance occur in many places in Chrysostom's works, e. g. Sir. 4:8; 18:15–17; 42:9 etc. Many references from later authors have also been discussed in this work, which strongly support our hypothesis that Sirach was translated in the 5th century. All these works of Movsês Xorenac'i (5th c.), Grigor Narekac'i (10th c.), Grigor Archdeacon (6th-7th cc.), Łevond Patmič' (8th c.), Yovhan Ojnec'i (8th c.), Xosrov Anjewac'i (10th c.), Simeon Ałjnec' (10th c.), Grigor Tat'ewac'i (14th c) in many cases show the use of a common biblical source for their references.

Based on the issues in regard of Sirach's translation into Armenian, as well as its place within the Biblical canon this study has also sought to determine the role of this book in Armenia, its utilization by the Armenian monks in their teaching activities as well as its usage in the liturgical life of the Church.

The Latin name of the book 'Ecclesiasticus' (Church Book) speaks for itself. Sirach has been considered an important manual for teaching purposes. Even Ben Sira himself used his book in his own school where he taught young men

the skills which would secure for them a better and wiser life.[536] Many Armenian MSS of Sirach bear the title 'Սիրաքայ Իմաստասիրի' առ հնազանդեալ որդի' [Sirak'ay Imastasiri' ar hnazandeal ordi] (The Wisdom of Sirach the Wise addressed *to an obedient son*) which attests to the significant role given to this book.

The issue that we face in regard to the canonicity of Sirach still needs more detailed scrutiny. It must be stated at the outset that the question of the Armenian Biblical canon must still be considered unresolved. From many ecclesiastical councils held in Armenia, only the council of Partaw is known to touch directly upon the subject of Sirach's canonicity. This council based its approach to the Biblical canon on the preceding two canon lists of 'Erkrord Aṙak'elakan kam Kłemês', 'The [Second] Apostolic or Clement's Canons', 'Kanonk' Haranc' Hetewołac'', 'the Canons of the Post-Apostolic Fathers'. After listing the books of the OT, the Partaw canon, with some minute differences from the previous two, states: 'Եւ արտաքուստ պատգամաւորեսցի առ ի յուսուցանել ձեր մանկունս զուսումնաբազումսն Սիրաքայ իմաստնոյ' [Ew artak'owst patgamaworesc'i aṙ i yowsowc'anel jer mankowns zowsowmnabazowmsn Sirak'ay imastnoy] ('besides these you are recommended to teach your young persons the Wisdom of the very learned Sirach').[537] As in the case of the list in the Apostolic canons and that of the Post-Apostolic Fathers, my argument is that, in spite of its placement at the end of the list, the Book of Sirach is recognized as inspired scripture. It is considered different from the other books of the OT not for its insignificance but rather for its special and unique role, that is, its broad use in the teaching of young people. The word utilised for 'besides' in Classical Armenian 'արտաքուստ' [artak'owst] does not exclude Sirach from the rest of the Bible but rather points to a special role given to this book on Armenian clergy and laity. My theory is that it is purely due to its educational use that Sirach is listed at the end of the three aforementioned canon lists of the Bible. The undeniable role that this book has had in the Armenian tradition can be seen by looking at each and every aspect of the ecclesiastical tradition of the Armenians.

The nature and the style of those additional four passages found nowhere else but in the Armenian translation demonstrate the high regard that the Armenians have had for this book. In the second additional portion of Sir. 17:12 'Չարն զչարութիւն ուսոյց նոցա, եւ զԱստուած եւ զէրն արարչական ետ արհամարհել նոցա։ Եւ զեւթնեակ շնորհսն հան ի նոցանէ, եւ եւթն

536 In several instances Sirach addresses his speech to his students and emphasizes the importance of keeping his exhortations. Cf. Sir. 2:1; 3:12; 3:17 etc.

537 Վ. Հակոբյան, Կանոնագիրք հայոց [V. Hakobyan, '*Kanonagirk' hayoc'*, p 18].

յանցանօք ելից զնոսա', [Č'arn zč'arowt'iwn owsoyċ noċa, ew zAstowac ew zsêrn ararč'akan et arhamarhel noċa: Ew zewt'neak šnorhsn han i noċanê, ew ewt'n yanċanôk' eliċ znosa] (The Evil One taught them wicked things and made them neglect God and [His] creational love. And [the evil one] took out from them the seven graces and filled them with seven sins) the problem of theodicy that the verse brings forth is very closely related to the history of sufferings of the Armenians. The author of this portion is clearly warning his readers to be aware of the evil powers – this may be referred to the invaders of Armenia – which can make people neglect God 'եւ զԱստուած եւ զէրն արարչական ետ արհամարհել նոցա' [ew zAstowac ew zsêrn ararč'akan et arhamarhel noċa]. However, the example of the sinful people who stopped putting their trust in God alone must always remind them of the distractions that can be caused by one's arrogance and sinful lifestyle.[538] This is a testimony that within the text of Sirach, people in Armenia found their comfort and consolation. That is why it was considered important to add these lines into the main text of Sirach.

The other passage (Sir. 20:28) which again has a vivid relevance to the Armenian environment reveals the continuous development of the text of Sirach in the Armenian schools. Its form of address (my child), similar to that used by Sirach himself, attests to its use as a teaching manual by the vardapets (teacher) of the monasteries. 'Որդեա՛կ՝ պահեա՛ զբանս իմ, եւ խելամուտ լեր ի դմա՛ ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի' [Ordea՛k՝ pahea՛ zbans im, ew xelamowt ler i dma՛ i towê ew i gišeri] (My child, keep my words and ponder upon them day and night), the intimate message of the teacher or possibly the conversation carried on in the seminary (čemaran) is another warning to be conscious of your noble ancestry (ժառանգ մեծազգի) [žaŕang mecazgi] and lead your life in a way deserving of their (ancestors') honoured memory (մեծազնութիւնն) [mecaznowt'iwnn].

The references to Sirach used by the Armenian and non-Armenian authors examined in this study, are enough to perceive the great influence that this piece of wisdom literature has had among Armenians. The additions to the Armenian texts are themselves proofs that Sirach was regarded as something more than just a wisdom writing. It was both a manual for conducting a virtuous daily life and a source of inspiration for many in their endeavours to find wisdom and happiness.

538 Sir. 17:12 additional portion in Աստուածաշնունչ մատեան Հին եւ Նոր կտակարանաց [*Astowacašownč' matean Hin ew Nor ktakaranac' Vol. 1* (ed. H. Zôhrapean, Venice, 1805)]. This portion has some resemblance with Sir. 3:28, 'When calamity befalls the proud, there is no healing, for an evil plant has taken root in him'.

Nalean and His Commentary

The second section of this thesis discusses the *Commentary on Sirach* composed by Yakob Nalean, which is so far the only known Armenian commentary on this book.[539] In order to have a better understanding of Nalean's approach to the variety of subjects addressed in the book of Sirach an introductory glance has been cast at the situation in Armenia and Armenian communities abroad. All the Armenian authors of Nalean's times were influenced by the political, socio-economic and cultural situation in Armenia. The ongoing struggle for justice and for the alleviation of foreign oppression is the framework within which the commentary on Sirach by Nalean must be examined. Unlike Syriac exegetical methods, which vary from commentary to commentary on Sirach,[540] Nalean combines many methods in one commentary, looking at the same issues both from purely textual-critical and also allegorical or metaphorical points of view. In a few instances he also expresses his worries and concerns in the form of poetry about many issues that his flock is facing, as in the case of 'Մեծացի՛ր, անձն իմ խղճալի' (Grow up, my miserable soul!). There is also an interesting one-line presentation of the commentary included by Nalean into his work to help the reader grasp the main idea of each chapter of Sirach at ease. Patriarch Nalean gives a Christian character to his commentary. He makes sure that the solely academic exegesis occasionally gives way to a more pastoral or liturgical understanding of Sirach. This combination reveals Nalean's efforts in making the Wisdom of God more accessible to his ordinary readers the majority of which are those regularly attending the church services. The subject of Wisdom-Word and then ultimately Wisdom-Happiness discussed in the last section of this study elucidates some important details that Nalean presents as matters of particular importance for everyone.

When talking about fear of the Lord, the Law, wisdom and happiness, Nalean emphasizes the significance of being reconciled with God and being at peace with Him. 'Գիտելի է, զի գիտութիւն ըստ ճշմարտութեան եւ իսկականի ճանաչման է Աստուծոյ եւ խաղաղութեան ընդ նմա'[541] [Gi-

539 The translation of Cornelios A'Lapida's commentary on Sirach produced in the 18th c. by Kapoutik is not taken into consideration as it was originally written in Latin. Cf. M. M. Matenadaran, N. 2055.

540 The characters of the Syriac commentaries on Sirach significantly differ from each other. For example, Bar Koni puts more emphasis on the explanation of difficult words of Sirach while Barhebraeus presents a more comprehensive exegesis of this book. Cf. W. van Peursen, 'Ben Sira in the Syriac Tradition' in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira: Transmission and Interpretation* (ed. J. Rey and J. Joosten, Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 143 – 65.

541 MM. MS N. 1014, 1771, p. 5v.

teli ê, zi gitowt̒iwn əst čšmartowt̒ean ew iskakani čanač̒man ê Astowcoy ew xałałowt̒ean ənd nma] (it is known that the true knowledge [wisdom] comes through knowing God and being at peace with him). This is to a certain extent a prerequisite in order to proceed to the other heights (յայլս բարձունս) [yayls barjowns] in relationship with God. And the highest point of this relationship, happiness, is gained through fear and love of the Lord as well as wisdom. In my research, I particularly underline Sirach's views on happiness based on Nalean's commentary and some key verses from Sirach, such as: 14:20, 25:10 and 37:24. In Sir. 14:20 'Happy is the person who meditates on wisdom and reasons intelligently' meditation on wisdom is seen as a platform which secures one's happiness. Then, in 25:10 'How great is the one who finds wisdom! But none is superior to the one who fears the Lord', Ben Sira in an interesting way places wisdom and fear of the Lord on the opposite ends of a scale on which it becomes clear that fear of the Lord, if it does not outweigh, then certainly equals wisdom. The last of the three verses which I bring to underpin my argument is Sir. 37:24 'A *wise person* will have praise heaped upon him, and all who see him will call him *happy*'. It becomes obvious here that wisdom is merely a means for gaining happiness and that it does not in itself necessarily reflect the overall wellbeing of human beings.

In the last chapter of this study some other major theological themes of Sirach were addressed in the light of Nalean's commentary. The subjects of free will and social justice have been in the core of Nalean's worldview. His entire literary heritage is rooted in high theological questions about the existence of God, creation, free will and sin, and at the same time having been shaped by social issues of his time. The continuous struggle of the poor for their everyday existence and their exploitation by the upper class together with many other pastoral matters can be seen reflected in Nalean's commentary.

As the initial study on Sirach in the Armenian tradition, this research does not aim to provide detailed coverage of all the aspects of the subject. However, it gives a coherent picture of the many issues that the modern scholarship must face when doing research on this subject. Production of a critical edition of the Armenian Sirach is vital in furthering study in this field. The references to Sirach found in ancient and medieval Armenian literature as well as the canonical issues in regard of this book attest to the fact that, on one hand, Sirach has been regarded as 'Աստուածաշունչ' (inspired by God) and on the other hand, it has unduly suffered from the uncertainties around the canon of the Armenian Bible in general. All in all, however, the undeniable great role of this book, used amongst Armenians as a manual of righteous life, is a clear and indisputable fact.

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